

All true Ministers of the Gospel, are called into that Work by the special Influences of the Holy Spirit.

A Theology vol 45.
DISCOURSE
Shewing the
Nature and Necessity
OF AN
Internal CALL
To Preach the
Everlasting Gospel.

Also Marks by which Christ's Ministers may be known from others, and Answers to sundry *Objections*: Together with some Observations on the Principles and Practices of many in the present Day concerning these Things.

To which is added,
Some short Account of the Experiences and dying Testimony of Mr. Nathanael Shepherd.

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THE P R E F A C E.

ONCE it is the Unhappiness of Mankind in their
BASING benighted Circumstances, to be divided in
SENTIMENT Sentiments about many Things in the Me-
thod of our Recovery and Salvation : so
when they come to speak or write upon Points that
are much controverted, it is often done in such a
Manner as to increase their Contentions and Divisions,
rather than to remove them. One great Cause whereof
I conceive to be this, namely, a judging of Principles
by the Lives of those that hold them, rather than by
the

the eternal Standard of Truth : so that if they can see many Evils in Persons that are of contrary Sentiments from themselves, they are ready to conclude that they have good Grounds to condemn what they hold as false. Indeed if we are called to judge whether a Person's Profession is true or false, that must be done by his Life or Fruits, Mat. 7. 16. But whether their Principles that they profess, be true or false, cannot certainly be known by that. I believe that CHRIST designed to caution his Disciples against this Snare in that Place, Matt. 23. 2, 3. The Scribes and Pharisees sit in Moses Seat. All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do. Some I know frame an Argument from hence to support unconverted Ministers, as if CHRIST set them up for Teachers : but I conceive that his true Design was to caution his Followers against casting away Truth, because such corrupt Men as he was going to shew them to be, held it : but whatever they taught agreeable to Moses Law, he bid them observe, yet not to do after their Works, for they said and did not. And he goes on to shew, that they shut up the Kingdom of Heaven against Men, and neither went in themselves, nor suffered them that were entering to go in. He calls them blind Guides, and Serpents, that were not like to escape the Damnation of Hell,

Ver.

P R E F A C E .

Ver. 13, 16, 33. And what Man of Sense can think
but our Saviour owned such as his Messengers ?

By the false Rule mentioned above, some have condemned even the greatest Points in Religion : as I think I once see an Observation of Dr. Mather's concerning a foreign Number of Heathens who had some Dealings with the Spaniards ; and they (holding that Heathen Notion of there being many Gods) judg'd that CHRIST was the worst of all Gods, because the Spaniards profest themselves to be Christians, and they were the worst of all Men.

Another Error near akin to this, is a not distinguishing carefully between what is good and what is bad in a Person, or Body of People ; but to condemn or justify all together. To which may be added the Way of trying to represent others Sentiments or practice in the worst Colour they can. By reason of which some have become guilty of Railery, if not the reach of the ninth Commandment, while they have been essaying to cut down Error.

Having some Sight of these Things, has made me endeavour to watch against them in writing this Discourse ;

Discourse ; and to be tender of Men's Persons while I am speaking against their Mistakes. And I have endeavour'd as much as might be to keep from condemning any Number of People at a Lump, but I have express plainly what I think to be right, and what not among them. Yet still if the careful Reader discovers any Thing of these, or other Evils in this Treatise, impute that to my Infirmity ; but let not that hinder your Soul from embracing what is Truth.

One Thing more I will mention that is often a great Hindrance to Men's receiving Truth, and that is, a making a wrong Use of the Practice of the Godly in past Ages. How common is it for Men to say that this or that is contrary to what our Fathers held, and so reject it ? as if they were our Rule. And many seem to think that to vary from them, reflects upon their Characters as if they were corrupt Men. And I expect the most Batteries from this Quarter of any, against the Truth that I am mainly pleading for in this Book. Therefore, though I have said something to this in answer to an Objection, yet I will add a Word here.

Solomon was a great and good Man, but yet he set up the high Places which were most provoking to GOD,

GOD, 1 King. 11. 7, 8. And both Asa and Jehoshaphat after him were godly Men, and great Reformers, and yet them high Places were not taken away (1 King. 15. 14. and 22. 43.) which afterwards Hezekiah abolished, and also took away the Brazen Serpent, which from Moses Time to that Day the Children of Israel had Idolized, 2 King. 18. 4. Now according to this Language that many use, they might have said, "What! does this Hezekiah pretend to " know more than Solomon? and will he condemn " all his godly Fathers as corrupt Men, who held " and practised these Things?" And yet after all his Reformation, and the farther Steps thereof that his Grandson Josiah proceeded in, (2 King. 23—) the poor Captives that returned out of Babylon, found that none of them all, nor David neither, though a Man after God's own Heart, had kept the Feast of Tabernacles in the Form that GOD's Law described: therefore they reformed that, and kept such a Feast, as had not been kept before since the Days of Joshua the Son of Nun, Neb. 8. 13—17. From all which, and much more of the like Nature that might be observed, we may see plainly that the Example of the best of Men is no just Objection at all against our receiving Truth that they did not see. Neither is it so to be looked upon any Reflection upon their Character,

thus to vary from them. If we do not vary from the Scriptures we are safe and happy.

Now 'tis likely that many when they see this Discourse, will be ready to deem it to be Pride and Arrogancy for such a Youth to come out in this Form against so many great, learned, yea and good Men. But I can freely leave that to my divine Master, to plead my Cause, knowing that a good Conscience is better than all the Applause of mortal Men.

Some of the Reasons of my coming forth in this Manner, are as follow. Since the L O R D was pleased to call me forth into this great Work of Preaching the Gospel; as I have had Opportunity to improve in that Work in various Places, the Question has often been ask'd me, especially by the common Ministers of the Land, *What Call I held so, whether ordinary, or extraordinary, mediate or immediate?* And when we have come to discourse upon it, it has appeared plain to me, that what they hold to be an ordinary Call, is to be called only by Men; and an extraordinary one is to be called of G O D, by the special Influences of his S P I R I T. For I have heard them go through with

a Description of their Call, and never mention GOD's SPIRIT in the Case ; but only that they were educated for that Purpose, and then were introduced, and ordained in an orderly Way.

Indeed some of them will say, that they have an internal Call : but when they come to describe it, they say, " 'Tis a hearty Disposition to serve " GOD in that Work." But is it not strange, that reasonable Men should reckon this to be a Call from GOD ? Do they think there ever was a corrupt Man in the World, that went into that Work without some Disposition to it, which doubtless they called a Disposition to serve GOD ? Or should we allow it to be a sincere Disposition, yet still that is not a Call. The most that can be made of it is a Willingness to be called. Every Saint when standing as they ought, are willing to do any Thing that GOD would have them : but something much further than that is needful in order to make them know that he would have them preach the Gospel publickly. I would not be understood to hold forth that there is none which bold Fellowship with the Scheme that I condemn, that have truly experienced a Call from the SPIRIT of GOD into the Work of preaching the Gospel ; for I believe there are some, though they may not be convinced of the Evil.



P R E F A C E.

Evil of that Method of going on. But a great Part of the Ministers in the Land evidently run in the Channel that I have described above.

Therefore to return, when I have heard them talk in such a Form, it has put me upon a more close Examination of the Scriptures, and to look more critically into the Nature of these Things : (for much of what I have here written, I knew experimentally before I did doctrinally, Prov. 16. 23.) And after much Search, and crying to the L O R D for Direction, though it never was my Disposition from a Child to appear singular from others, yet I have been constrained to appear against many in this Point. I waited long and attended diligently to what others could say ; I said, Days should speak, and Multitude of Years should teach Wisdom. But great Men are not always wise : therefore I said, I will answer my Part, I also will shew my Opinion, Job 32. 7, 9, 17. For I am perswaded that many godly People, being traditionally trained up in that way, think it is a Gospel-Way : but being so clearly convinced that it is not, it has appeared clear Duty to me not to bide my Candle under a Bushel, but to hold up the Light which GOD hath given me, for the Good of others.

Another

Another Motive to my publishing this Treatise is this, that when the *LORD* is carrying on a glorious Work for the Good of Souls at any Time, those who stand against it, will first try as much as possible to pick some Flaw in the Preaching or the Conduct of his Ministers, that he improves to carry it on; but if they cannot get any Advantage that Way, but are forced to own that some notable Things are said, or done: Then the last Shift they have to make is, By what Authority dost thou these Things? And who gave thee this Authority? Mat. 21. 23. Acts 4. 7. Therefore it has appeared duly to me, to shew what the Authority of *CHRIST*'s Ministers is, and how they come by it: and also by this, to clear my own Soul from partaking of the Sin of this Generation in these Things. And while I have been writing upon these Points, the Work of a Gospel-Minister has opened with fresh Clearness and Weight to my Soul; and has made me cry, Oh! that while I am writing to others, I may never be negligent, but may be made faithful in this great Work my self! What was mainly upon my Mind, was to describe the Call, and the Characters of *CHRIST*'s Messengers, and how they differ from others: but in prosecuting this Theme, I have set down many Things that are of common Concernment, and if rightly received may be beneficial to all.

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Let none think me to be an Enemy to Learning because of what I have said in this Book: for true Learning is what I highly prize: a clear understanding of the proper Use of Language, and the Meaning of Words, whereby Men have such a Priviledge of conveying their Ideas to each other, is very beneficial for all; and a clear Knowledge of the Things of Nature, and of the Affairs of Mankind, &c. is good in its Place, and I wish there was much more of it in the World than there is. But then there are a great many Notions that some take much Time to learn that do no good: and what is worse, it is evident that in our Colleges many learn corrupt Principles, not only about what makes a Minister, but also about what makes a Christian; for it is too notorious to be denied, that many Scholars that have come out of College of late, are rank Arminians. Yet were it not so, it is horrid Presumption to pretend to limit the Most High to any Schools, or Bodies of People whatsoever, and to say that he shall have none for his Ambassadors but such as Men have trained for that Purpose in their way.

How terrible are those Interrogations? Who hath directed the SPIRIT of the LORD, or being his Counsellor, hath taught him? *Isai. 40. 13.*

And

And again, Who is like me, and who will appoint me the Time ? And who is that Shepherd that will stand before me ? Surely the least of the Flock shall draw them out, Jer. 50. 44, 45.

When I have been writing on these Things, sometimes my Belly hath been as Wine which hath no Vent : and to express what was in my Heart hath been very refreshing, by Reason of which, this Discourse is drawn out to a much greater length than was first designed. And now so many Things crowd in upon my Mind that I scarce know where to end : but I must break off.-----

Now kind Reader, if thou findest any Benefit to thy Soul by this Treatise, give all the Glory unto GOD, and pray for your Soul's Friend to serve you as GOD shall give Opportunity.

Middleborough,
Dec. 18. 1753.

ISAAC BACKUS.

—quod illi oculi has non videntur. V. dixi hanc
et dixi illi quod videntur. T. dixi quod videntur
et dixi illi quod videntur. V. dixi hanc
et dixi illi quod videntur. T. dixi quod videntur
et dixi illi quod videntur.

C H A P. I.

The Introduction, shewing the right Use of the Scriptures, and how God's People are guided by them in these Days. And the main Question stated and explained.

ONE very great Means that God has been pleased to make use of from the beginning for the Recovery and Salvation of lost Men, has been the Preaching of his Word : And therefore in every Age he has called, and set apart particular Men for that Purpose. *Jude speaks of Enoch's prophesying, Jude 14. And Noah is called a Preacher of Righteousness, 2 Pet. 2. 5.* And we are told that God at sundry Times, and in divers Manners spake in Time past unto the Fathers by the Prophets, Heb. 1. 1. And in latter Times, though the preaching of the Cross is to them that perish Foolishness : yet unto them that are saved, it is the Power of God, 1 Cor. 1. 18.

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Hence it is a Truth allowed in general by all Persuasions, that the publick preaching of the Word, is an Ordinance of divine Appointment. But then there is a great Diversity of Sentiments, about how Men are to be qualified and introduced into this great Work. Multitudes place their Qualifications more in human Learning, than in divine Enlightnings ; and place their Authority more in being externally called, and set apart by Men, than in being internally called by the Spirit of God. Yea, many seem to make no Account of the latter, but set it aside as an extraordinary Thing, not to be expected in these Days. And the main Argument that is commonly brought to prove this is, that the Bible is compleated, and the Days of Inspiration are ceased ; therefore to hold that any are by the Spirit and Power of God in these Days, called and sent forth into this Work, this they say, is giving heed to new Revelations : for it is nowhere expressed in Scripture, that this or that Man, is, or ever will be called to preach the Gospel. But though I believe with all my Heart that the Cannon of the Scripture is full ; and that there is a Curse denounced against any that shall *add to, or diminish from it*, Rev. 22. 18, 19 : yet I am far from thinking that it is just to conclude from hence, that the Lord does not in these Days as really call and direct his Servants by his Spirit as he did in old Time : yea, to deny this, is to contradict a great Part of the Scriptures, as I trust will hereafter be made appear. This Argument the Papists, and

and many others make use of against Assurance, and it is as good there as here; for it is no more recorded in Scripture that this or that Person in our Days is, or ever shall be converted, than it is that any Person is, or shall be called to preach the Gospel.

But the Truth is, the Scriptures are given as our only perfect Rule, *which is able to build us up, and to give us an Inheritance among all them which are sanctified, through Faith which is in Christ Jesus, Act. 20. 32. 2 Tim. 3. 15.* And it is the Spirit of God, and that alone that enlightens our Minds to understand his Word aright, and that shews Men their Condition and their Duty, and guides his People into all Truth, *Job. 16*—When he sets home the Law upon a Sinner's Conscience, he is made to know that he is a guilty Soul before God, as certainly as if his Name was express in God's sacred Book: for it lays open his particular Sins, and charges them home upon his Conscience with Power; and thus the Word of God becomes a *Discerner of the Thoughts and Intents of the Heart, Heb. 4. 12.* So when a Soul has a Discovery of Christ, he sees him not only to be a Saviour in general, but also that he is just such a Saviour as he needs; and God's Language to such as find Grace in the Wilderness is, *Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting Love, therefore with Loving-kindness have I drawn thee, Jer. 31. 2, 3.* I know there has been much Dispute in our Day on this Point, i. e. “Whether

i. e. "Whether the first Act of saving Faith be
 " a believing that Christ is mine, or no—" But I apprehend that this Similitude, if rightly consider'd, may help much to clear this Matter: namely, Christ's being compared to the Sun: *The Lord God is a Sun— And unto you that fear my Name, shall the Sun of Righteousness arise—* Psal. 84. 11. and Mal. 4. 2. Now the Sun in his Being, Lustre and Glory is the Object for us to view, but then it is impossible for us to behold it, but its Rays appear to point as directly to us, as if there was not another Person in the World for it to shine upon: and we partake (as it were) of the whole Benefit of its Influences; and yet 'tis as free for Thousands of others as for us. So Jesus Christ in his personal Glories, and mediatorial Fulness, as revealed in the Gospel, is the Object of Faith: but when any Soul is brought to behold his Glories, them eternal Rays of Light and Love shine down particularly upon him, to remove his Darkness, heal his Wounds, and shed immortal Blessings on his Soul; so that he has a whole Saviour; and yet still he is free for whosoever will.

And thus God also leads his People in Duty, by applying home his Truth, not barely by suggesting particular Words into our Minds, but by causing divine Light to shine into our Understandings, and giving us to view his Word as it is, and so applying the Truths therein recorded to our particular Cases and Circumstances.

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And though many abuse the Scriptures greatly, and Words may many Times come into their Minds without their Understandings being enlightened, which they may improve very foreign from, yea contrary to, what was originally design'd therein: yet that is no just Argument at all against the People of God's having true Teaching in this Matter: Though it shews the Importance of taking good Heed in the Case, and carefully to compare spiritual Things with spiritual, and to view the Analogy of the Scripture, *1 Cor. 2. 13.*

Some say, that for any of the Words of Scripture to be brought in with Power upon our Minds, and we take them to be the Voice of God to us, this is giving Heed to new Revelations, because them Words were spoken to others long ago: but the Apostle tells us, (*Rom. 15. 4.*) That **WHATSOEVER** Things were written afore time, were written for our Learning, that we through Patience and Comfort of the Scriptures might have Hope. What was spoken to any of God's People of old as Directions or Commands to Duty, is of constant Use now to guide his People in like Cases; as saith the Apostle, *All Scripture is given by Inspiration of God: and is profitable for Doctrine, for Reproof, for Correction, for Instruction in Righteousness; that the Man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto ALL good Works, 2 Tim. 3. 15,—17.*

The same also may be said of the Promises. Here observe how the Author to the *Hebrews* teaches

teaches us to improve the Scriptures in this Respect. When he was exhorting them Saints to persevere in a Course of practical Religion, and to be content with all the Alotments of divine Providence, he gives them this Ground of Support, for them to rest upon, viz. *For he bath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee*, Heb. 13. 5. Now this was a particular Promise that was made to Joshua, to encourage him to go on boldly in that great Work of leading *Israel* into *Canaan*, Josh. 1. 5. And many of our late Teachers would be ready to say, that if any should receive Comfort from them Words coming with Power upon their Hearts, that they were giving Heed to new Revelations therein : but the Apostle applies it as belonging to all Souls in every Age, that are engaged in the Work of God, and in going on in his Ways, that they may rest upon it, and may boldly say, *The Lord is my Helper, I will not fear what Man can do unto me* : in which he brings in also the triumphant Language of holy *David* as what may be rightly used by God's People in general that cleave near unto him, *Psal. 118. 6*.

I know Scripture Language is awfully used, and dreadfully abused by many Souls ; yet that is no Argument against using of it in a right Manner. But I shall not enlarge further here ; though something of this seemed needful to lay the Foundation, and to prepare the Way for the following Discourse. And now to come to what is mainly designed

designed in this Treatise; I shall lay down this plain Assertion, namely,

That in order for any Man in these Days to be truly an Ambassador of the LORD OF HOSTS, he must experience essentially the same Internal Call that all his Messengers did of old, both in the Old Testament and the New.

This I shall first explain a little, and then go on to prove it. Now no Doubt but Persons in general that are much acquainted with Language, can easily distinguish between the Essence of a Thing, and some Circumstances and Appendages that attend it. And in this Case, I think, there is a plain Distinction to be made between the Essence of the Call of the Prophets and Apostles, and some Things that attended their Call, and Work.

As, 1. Some of them when they were called, had a strange visionary Discovery of Things. *Ezekiel* had such Views of the Glory of God, and the Retinue of his Attendants, as was very shocking, and made him fall on his Face, &c. Chap. 1. And many Things of the like Nature we have recorded in Scripture concerning others, which are not commonly experienced now. And as to their Work; a Part of it was to write the Scriptures, which I have no Thought that any will be called to in our Days.

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2. There were many Miracles and extraordinary Things that were wrought by them to confirm the Truth of the Messages they brought, to those who had not received God's revealed Mind and Will before ; at least those Parts of it that they then brought. *Mark 16. 20. Confirming the Word with Signs following.* Now as to this, and also the extraordinary Gift of Tongues ; whether they will be given or no to God's Servants when those Nations shall be brought in which hitherto have not known the Word of the Lord, I leave with him that orders all Things, to determine ; and to the Consideration of those that are wise of Heart. *

Again, There is this to be observed, that in different Periods of the Church, the Lord's Servants have different Works to do in many Particulars, according to the different Circumstances that the Church is in.

Moses had many particular Works to do, in bringing *Israel* out of *Egypt* ; and *Joshua* in leading them into *Canaan*, that none of God's Servants had, in after Ages. The same also might be said concerning their returning from *Babylon* to re-build

* I think I once happened to see a printed Letter of Dr WATTS's, in which he mention'd Mr. EDWARDS's Sermon on the *Trial of the Spirit*, preach'd at *New Haven* 1741. and he approved of the main of the Sermon : but withal said, He was not of Mr. EDWARDS's Mind about the Gift of Tongues being ceased ; for he believed it would be restored again when the Heathen Nations should come in.

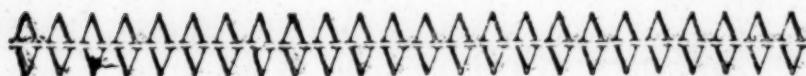
Jerusalem and the Temple: And again of the abolishing of the Jewish Ceremonies, and of building the Gospel Church, &c. Every Period may have some Things peculiar to that Time. But then I fully agree with the excellent Dr. FRANCK, that " though it cannot be said that " every believing Christian must do the very " same Works, which were done by *Noah*, " *Abraham*, *Moses* and others; yet ought every " one to follow the Faith of those godly Men, " and to shew, and exert the same with full " Power and Energy, in that State and Condition wherein God has placed him, and in " those Circumstances which are daily offered: " and in so doing, he may be fully assured, that " he also shall see the Glory of God, as well " as they of Old did experience the same."*

I will illustrate this Matter a little farther here by a familiar Instance. The Apostle Paul's Conversion, in the Manner and Circumstances of it, was uncommon and very extraordinary, *Acts 9. 3. &c.* *A Light at Noon Day, shined round him above the Brightness of the Sun; the Lord spake to him with an audible Voice; he was struck to the Ground; was struck blind, and eat nothing for three Days, &c.* Now these are Things which Persons do not commonly experience, when they are converted in our Days: And yet the Essence and Nature of his Conversion, as he de-

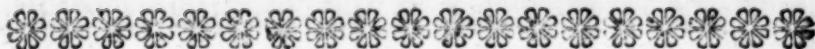
* See his *Treatise of the Fear of Man*, P. 169.
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scribes it himself, in the 7th Chapter of his Epistle to the *Romans*; and the 3d to the *Philippians*, is the same that all Souls in every Age must experience, or they can never enter into the Kingdom of God.

So I look upon it in this Case: though some Things were uncommon in the Call, and Work of the Prophets and Apostles; yet essentially theirs was the same with all true Ministers of Christ in our Days: as I shall proceed to prove.



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CHAP. II.

The Proof of the Point, that God's Messengers now, have essentially the same internal Call, as they had of Old ; by four Arguments.

THE Essence of the Call of all God's Messengers of Old, as I take it, was their being, by the Work of his Spirit, on their Hearts, commissionated, and sent forth in his Name, to labour for the Recovery and Salvation of perishing Men.— And that Men must experience the same, before they can truly be Ambassadors of Christ now ; I think will appear evident from these following Considerations.

I. They personate the same eternal God that all his Messengers did of Old.— *Moses* was bid to tell the People, *I AM* hath sent me unto you, Exod. 3. 14. And *Ezekiel* was to say, *Thus saith the Lord God, whether they would hear, or whether they would forbear, &c.* Ezek. 2. 4, 5. So now in these Times, them that have the Word of Reconciliation committed to them, are Ambassadors for Christ,

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as though God did beseech you by us ; we pray you in CHRIST's Stead, be ye reconciled to God, 2 Cor. 5. 20. And surely it is as great a Thing to go in the Name of the great JEHOVAH, to treat with the Children of Men now, as ever it was : therefore they have as much need of being particularly and powerfully called and sent by Him now, as heretofore : *How shall they preach except they be sent, Rom. 10. 15.*

II. God is as near to his Church now as formerly ; and therefore there needs none to be substituted in his Room, to chuse out, and send forth his Ministers. This Notion that the Ambassadors of the *Lord of Hosts* now, have not their Call and Commission sealed to them by the divine Spirit as clearly and powerfully, as they had of Old, seems to be founded upon an Apprehension that God is gone farther off from his Church in these Days than he was then : like a King that visits his Subjects in various Parts of his Dominion, and gives them Rules and Directions concerning their Behaviour, and appoints Officers over them ; and then returns to his Palace, and leaves them to choose others afterwards ; and so to transact Affairs in his Absence.

But though it is very natural for fallen Men to conceive thus of the divine Being ; yet such Things are highly provoking to his sacred Majesty. This seems to be the Sin that *Israel* was guilty of in *asking them a King*. Before that the Lord was near to them whenever they sought him

him in Truth ; and did from Time to Time raise up and send Judges and Leaders to them, just as he pleased : but they could not bear to have their Leaders thus from God, and to be obliged always to go to him for them : Nay (said they) but let us have a King like the rest of the Nations, 1 Sam. 8. 5, 7, 19. So that the Lord tells Samuel that in this they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them. A putting God afar off is the Root of all Evil ; therefore he sums up the Cause of his destroying the Jews by the Babylonian Captivity, in these Words, They say the Lord hath forsaken the Earth, and the Lord seeth not.... Ezek. 9. 9. And as they put him far away in other Things, so they did particularly in this, of sending forth his Messengers ; and they held, that Men were put in to do it in his Room : which appears evident by the Letter that Shemaiah the Nebelamite (or Dreamer) sent from Babylon about the same Time, to Zephaniah and the rest of the Priests at Jerusalem, saying, The Lord hath made thee Priest instead of Jeboiada the Priest, that ye should be Officers in the House of the Lord, for every Man that is mad, and maketh himself a Prophet, that thou shouldest put him in Prison, and in the Stocks. Now therefore, why hast thou not reproved Jeremiah of Anatboth which MAKETH HIMSELF a Prophet to you, Jer. 29. 25, 26, 27. Note also the Method that he prescribes for to stop Deceivers: it is not by sound Doctrine to convince the Gainsayers ; (Tit. 1. 9.) but with Force and Cruelty, to put them in Prison and in the Stocks. And such is

is the Method that many have taken in our Days.

The very Body of Antichrist consists in setting Man up in Christ's Place ; as saith the Apostle, *Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshiped ; so that be as God sitteth in the Temple of God, shewing himself that he is God*, 2 Thess. 2. 4. Agreeable to which, is what Luther says to the Pope, (who pleads as much for a Succession down from Christ and his Apostles, as any do in our Land) says he, "How unlike is Christ to his Successors ? who yet would be his Vicars : and I fear many are so too properly. A Vicar is of one absent. If the Pope be President, Christ being absent, what is he other than Christ's Vicar ? But what then is that Church, but a Maltitude without Christ ? And what is such a Vicar, but Antichrist and an Idol ?" †

And surely there is something of Antichrist in this Scheme, of holding, That what was peculiar to Christ formerly (namely the commissioning and sending forth his Ministers) is now left with Men to do : at least here is *the Number of his Name, which is the Number of a MAN*, Rev. 13. 18. But though Man be set up thus in God's Place by many, yet we are told, *that the Lord hath chosen Zion : he hath desired it for his Habitation (and says) this is my Rest FOREVER : here will I dwell*,

† *Sufferers Mirrour*, Vol. 2. P. 7.

for I have desired it, Psal. 132. 13,---16. And here he will call forth, direct and bless his Ministers, and will yet clothe them with Salvation, that his Saints may shout aloud for Joy.

III. The Children of Men ; yea the Children of God, are no more capable of chusing out and sending forth, meet Persons for this great Work now, than they were in old Time. If *Samuel* as that faithful Servant of the Lord, when he was sent by his immediate Command, to anoint a Person for another Work, was not capable of chusing yet out the right Man himself ; yea, though he was so told what Family he should come out of ; then surely God's Servants now are not equal to this great Work of chusing out, and sending forth his Messengers from among the vast Crouds of the Children of Men.

The Reason that the Lord gave to *Samuel*, why he was not fit, of himself, to chuse out a meet Person to set over his People *Israel*, was because *Man looks on the outward Appearance, but God looks on the Heart*, 1 Sam. 16. 7. and that Reason stands as good now as then. *Man looks on the outward Appearance*; and therefore he is always prone to chuse the wise, the noble, and learned of this World : but we are told, that *God hath chosen the foolish Things of the World, to confound the wise* ; and *God hath chosen the weak Things of the World, to confound the mighty* ; and *base Things of the World, and things that are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and Things*

Things which are not, to bring to nought Things that are : that no Flesh should glory in his Presence, 1 Cor. 1. 27, 28, 29. Again, Man is not fit for this great Work ; for he is prone to get proud and selfish, and then he will encourage none but what will serve some selfish Interest. See how early this appeared, even in the Apostles themselves : and it was soon checked by our Saviour. In their Journey to Capernaum, the Disciples got to disputing, who should be greatest. Pride, and a Notion of Greatness was got up, and see how it discovers itself : When Christ asked, what was it that ye disputed among your selves by the Way ? After some Pause, John answered him saying, Master, we saw one casting out Devils in thy Name, and he followeth not US ; and we forbid him, because he followeth not US. But Jesus said, Forbid him not : for he that is not against us, is on our Part, Mark 9. 33----40.

Observe Christ's Disciples were inclined to assume that to themselves then, even when he was personally with them, that Multitudes have done in latter Days : but you see how sharply he reproves them for it ; and can we think that he will allow it in any now ?

Once more,

IV. Another Argument that I shall mention to prove that Ministers now should have (as to the Nature of it) the same Call that all God's Messengers had of old, is, that their Work is essentially as great. The Work of God's Servants heretofore, was to go in his Name to labour for the Recovery

an Internal CALL to preach the GOSPEL. 31

Recovery and Salvation of lost Men; and it is the same now.

Indeed in that Part of their Work of writing the Holy Scriptures, they laid the Foundation, and we are to build thereon: as the *Church* is said to be built upon the Foundation of the *Apostles and Prophets*, *Jesus Christ himself being the chief Corner Stone*, Eph. 2. 20.

But then as to their Work of warning Sinners to awake and turn to God, as they would *escape eternal Wrath*: This is as great now as ever it was; and a being unfaithful in it, is as dreadful as ever. The Lord told *Ezekiel* that if he did not faithfully *warn the Wicked*, they would die in their *Iniquity*, but their *Blood should be required at his Hand*. *Nevertheless, if he did faithfully warn them, and they would not turn: then they should die in their Iniquity, but he had delivered his Soul*, Ezek. 33. 8, 9. So Ministers in these Days, are set to watch for Souls, *as those that must give an Account*, Heb. 13. 17--- And immortal Souls are as precious now; and their Blood is as dreadful to answer for, as ever it was: O! therefore how can any one dare to enter into this great Work at any Time, without knowing that they are called and commissionated by him that is able, and faithful to carry them safely through it? Yea though they were invited into this Work by never so many of the Children of Men.

Again, the Work of feeding God's Flock (that
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is dear to him as the Apple of his Eye) is as great now as ever it was. And as his Flock is so peculiarly dear to him ; so he has always reserved this Prerogative to himself alone, to chuse out, and appoint meet Persons over them to feed them. When our Saviour had been speaking of the Importance and Blessedness of Saints standing always on their Watch ; Peter asked whether he spake that unto them, or even to all. In answier to which he spake something to them concerning their particular Work. Luke 12. 35, to 43. *And the Lord said, who then is that faithful and wise Steward, whom HIS LORD SHALL MAKE RULER OVER HIS Houshold, to give them their Portion of Meat in due Season ? Blessed is that Servant whom his Lord when he cometh shall find so doing.* Here you see that it is the Lord that sets Persons over his Houshold, to be Stewards of the *Mysteries of God, 1 Cor. 4. 1. and to feed his Sheep and Lambs, Joh. 21. 15, 16.* Also the Apostle plainly holds forth, to the Elders of the Church of Ephesus, that they were set over that Flock by the special Call and Influences of the divine Spirit. Says he, *Take Heed therefore unto your selves, and to all the Flock over the which the HOLY GHOST hath MADE YOU OVERSEERS, to feed the Church of God, which he hath purchased with his own Blood, A&ts 20. 28.* How can it be truly said that a Man is set over a Flock by the Holy Ghost, if they are not called into this Work by his special Influences ? Without this, if all the Men in this World should approbate them ; yet in God's Sight they run before they are sent.

I have not sent these Prophets (says God) yet they ran : I have not spoken to them, yet they prophesied, Jer. 23. 21. O! how many Woes does the Lord denounce against false Pastors in this Chapter ? He says they speak Peace to his Enemies, ¶ 17. and prophesie Lies in his Name : yet says he, I sent them not, nor commanded them : therefore they shall not profit this People at all, (Ver. 32.) But he says he will pour his Vengeance on them : and will deliver, and gather his People ; and I will set up Shepherds over them, which shall feed them, and they shall fear no more, nor be dismayed, neither shall they be lacking, saith the Lord, Ver. 4. Now if we consider what is said in Ver. 7, 8, it will appear that what is here said has a peculiar Reference to these last Times : so again, Ver. 20, in the latter Days ye shall consider it perfectly. And I believe that the Time is drawing on, more and more, when the Lord will deliver his Flock from those that devour them, instead of feeding of them, Ezek. 34.---- And He will give them Pastors after his own Heart, Jer. 3. 15.

Now then, to sum up these Things in few Words : Since Gospel-Ministers now, personate the same eternal God that his Servants did of old ; and since He is present with his Church to send them forth, as really now as formerly ; since also Man is no more fit for it than heretofore ; and the Work of watching for Souls as those that must give Account, and of feeding God's Flock, is as great now as ever it was : Therefore I conclude, that in Order for Persons rightly to go

go into that Work in these Days, they must experience essentially the same Call from the *Lord of Hosts*, that all his Messengers did in old Time.



CHAP. III.

The Nature of this Call explained.

IN the next Place I shall come on to speak something of the *Nature of this Call*, and shew what it is.

But here I would first observe, that as in Conversion, the Lord deals variously with different Persons, as to the Means he uses, and as to the length of Time that they are under Conviction, before the Work is accomplished; and also as to many Circumstances that attend it; so that no Man can lay out an exact Method, and determine that every Soul which is savingly changed, must be led exactly in that particular Path: yet as to the Essence of the Change, all experience alike, that are truly converted: so it is in a Call to preach the Gospel; the Means that are used, and many Circumstances of it, may be very various, but the Substance of the Call is always the same.

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One Thing more I would also premise before I go on : and that is, that it will be necessarily implied in the following Discourse, *That a Man must be a real Saint, in order to his being truly called of God into this Work.*

I know not how I can express my Thoughts better, in few Words, on this Point, than by using the Words of another*, as followeth, "God has not, indeed, limited the Efficacy of Ordinances by the Character of the Dispenser. But yet the Scriptures warrant us to say, that wicked Ministers run unsent, and that God generally frowns upon and blasts their Labours, *Psal. 50. 10. and Jer. 23. 21, 22, 23.* When Souls are entrusted to the Slaves of Satan, we cannot but dread a bad Account of them ; for what Concern will these feel, or what Care will they take, about the Salvation of others, who feel no Concern for their own Salvation ? Ministers are Men of God, (*1 Tim. 6. 11.*) which surely imports Men devoted to his Service, conformed to his blessed Image, zealous for his Honour, animated by his Spirit, and breathing after Communion and Fellowship with him. But a Man of God, living without God in the World ! a Man of God, whose Affections are earthly, sensual, and devilish ! a Master of Israel, ignorant of the New-Birth ! *Job. 3. 10.* A Guide to Zion, walking

* See Mr. John Erskine's Sermon before the Synod at Glasgow, 1750. P. 4, 5.

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“ in the Paths that lead to Destruction! a Soldier of Christ, in League with Satan, is a shocking and monstrous Absurdity.

Having mentioned these Things, I shall now come on to describe what it is, *to have an internal Call to preach the Gospel.*--- There is contained in it, a Discovery of the present State of God's People;--- The Treasure of the Gospel's being open'd and committed to the Soul,--- and God's Command therewith, to go and feed his Sheep and Lambs, with such Clearness as to answer all Objections, and sweetly and powerfully to constrain the Person to go into that great Work.

1. There is a Discovery of the present State of God's People. This is absolutely necessary, in order for a Man's being able, rightly to perform his Work.--- The Work of God's Messengers is compared to that of a *Watchman*, both in the Old Testament and New, *Ezek. 33.* and *Heb. 13.* &c. Now it is essentially necessary, in order for a Watchman rightly to perform his Work, that he be first set where he can clearly view the State and Circumstances of the Army, that he may see where they are exposed, and when the Enemy is coming in. How absurd a Thing would it be, for to set a Man for a Watchman that was blind: or to set one in a Place where he could see little or nothing of the Case of the People? Every whit as absurd is it to set a Man to watch for Souls, who never was spiritually

spiritually enlightened from above, and brought to see the present Case of the Church, and of the World of Mankind as it is.

Christ says of the Pharisees, *They be blind, Leaders of the blind*; and therefore they were all like to *fall into the Ditch*, Matt. 15. 14. And they shewed their Blindness greatly in this, *that they did not discern that Time*, Chap. 16. 3: and therefore they cried out against the great Friend of God's People, even *the Son of God himself*, instead of warning them against their Enemies. Now this Blindness, was not the want of human Wisdom and Learning; for they had much of that: but it was the want of spiritual and divine Illuminations: as appears evident from Luke 10. 21. *Thou hast bid these Things from the Wise and Prudent, and hast revealed them unto Babes, &c.* Indeed every Saint has some Views of these Things; but to those which the Lord calls to be his Watchmen, he gives more special and clear Discoveries of them: and we may see something of this, in the various Calls that we have a particular Account of in Scripture.

When the Lord called *Moses* to go and lead *Israel* out of *Egypt*; he shewed him clearly the Condition that they lay in, and what he now designed concerning them: says he, *I have heard the Cry of thy Brethren under their Bondage, and I am come down to deliver them*, Exod. 3. 7, &c. So when the Lord came to call *Jeremiah*, he sets before him the awful Case and Condition that the *Jews*

Jews were then in, and the dreadful Desolations that were coming upon them, *Jer. 1. 14. &c.* The same he also shewed to *Ezekiel*, *Ezek. 2.....* This we may also observe in the New-Testament. In *Matt. 9*, latter end, our Saviour shews his Disciples how that *the Fields were white to the Harvest*; but *the Labourers were few*: *pray ye therefore the Lord of the Harvest to send forth Labourers*--- That is, he gave them a View of the Condition that immortal Souls lay in then, to stir up their Souls to thirst for their Deliverance, and to cry for their Help: and the next Thing is, he sends them forth to labour in this Field: as you may see in the beginning of the next Chapter. The like you may see in *Luke 10*--- where it appears, that not only the *Twelve*, but the *Seventy* were thus sent.

2. In this Call there is contained, a having the Treasure of the Gospel open'd and committed to the Soul--- *How can they preach except they be sent?* as it is written, *how beautiful are the Feet of them that preach the Gospel of Peace, and bring glad Tidings of good Things*, *Rom. 10. 15.* Here the Apostle shews, not only the Necessity of their being sent, in order for them to preach aright; but also that those which are sent, have the Treasure of the Gospel, and glad Tidings committed to them, to bring to immortal Souls.

When the Lord sends any, he gives them their Errand: Go (says he to *Moses*) and gather the *Elders of Israel together*, and say unto them

the Lord God of your Fathers,-- appeared unto me, saying, I have surely visited you, and seen that which is done to you in Egypt. And I have said I will bring you out of the Affliction of Egypt, unto the Land of the Canaanites, &c. Exod. 3. 16. &c. This having the Gospel-Treasure committed to us, is compared to receiving, and eating Food.

Thy Words were found (says Jeremiah) and I did eat them, and thy Word was unto me the Joy and rejoicing of mine Heart, Jer. 15. 16. And the Lord says to Ezekiel, Son of Man eat that thou findest ; eat this Roll, and go speak unto the House of Israel, Ezek. 3. 1. And I apprehend that John's eating the little Book, and then being told that he must prophesie before many People, and Nations, and Tongues, and Kings, (Rev. 10. 10, 11.) implies in it something more, than just his personal Ministry ; and that it reaches to all those that shall be called forth as God's Messengers afterwards, even until Time shall be no longer, (Ver. 6.) and till the Mystery of God shall be finished, (Ver. 7.)

I know it is said of Saints in general, that they shall not live by Bread alone ; but by every Word that proceedeth out of the Mouth of God, Matt. 4. 4. But his Ministers not only eat it for their own Souls Nourishment, but they receive, as it were the whole Treasure of the Word, to feed others with also. Hence the Lord says to Ezekiel, Fill thy Bowels with this Roll that I

give *thee*, Ezek. 3. 3. And the Apostle compares it to a Vessel's being filled with Food, or Treasure to feed others with : *We have this Treasure in Earthen Vessels, that the Excellency of the Power may be of God, and not of us*, 2 Cor. 4. 7.

By the Treasure of the Gospel's being committed to Men, I would not be understood, to hold forth, that they have an inherent Stock given them, so that they can do without constant Supplies from above. No, by no Means : for without constant Supplies from Christ, as *the Branch has from the Vine, we can do nothing*, Joh. 15. And to allude to the Similitude just now mention'd, we can no more feed God's People aright without his constant Help, than an Earthen Vessel could convey Food to a Multitude, and distribute to each one their Portion, without a living Hand to use it. But yet each one that God sends has his Promise, *that he will be with them alway, even unto the End of the World*, Matt. 28. 20. And that his *Grace shall be sufficient for them*, 2 Cor. 12. 9. Therefore I will mention one Similitude more, and that is, they are called Stewards : *Stewards of the Mysteries of God*; 1 Cor. 4. 1. And *Stewards over God's Household, to give them their Portion of Meat in due Season*, Luke 12. 42. Now the Provisions for the Household, are laid up in the Covenant of Grace in Christ Jesus : but every one of his Ministers, have the Key of God's Promise, by which he may (so to speak) unlock this glorious Store-House;

House ; and find Grace to help in every Time of Need, Heb. 4. 16. So that being strong in the Grace that is in Christ Jesus, (2 Tim. 2. 1.) he may shew himself a Workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of Truth, V. 15.

3. When a Person has thus a Discovery of the present State of Mankind, and has the Treasures of God's Word committed to him ; God's Command comes therewith in such Clearness as to answer all Objections, and sweetly and powerfully to constrain him to go into this great Work. Now it is plain that where-ever the Lord gives a Talent, or Talents to any Souls, he commands them to improve it faithfully, Matt. 25. 14, &c. Luke. 19. 13. His Command is, *As every Man hath received the Gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good Stewards of the manifold Grace of God, 1 Pet. 4. 10.*

But now a Soul that is brought to view the State of the Children of Men, and to see the Greatness of this Work ; though he longs for their Salvation, more than for any Thing in this World, yet Nature will struggle, and many Objections will be ready to arise in his Mind, against going.

Moses pleaded his Meanness, that he was not eloquent ; and that the People would not believe that God had sent him, &c. But the Lord answers him, by shewing the Fulness of Help that is in himself, and promising to be with him, to carry him

him through that weighty Work : and by his divine Authority, he overpowered all his Objections, and constrained *Moses* to obey him, see *Exod.* 4.---- So *Jeremiah* says, *Ab, Lord God, behold I cannot speak, for I am a Child.* But the Lord removes all his Objections with his Command, and his Promise, (which are ever join'd together in New-Covenant Language) *say not I am a Child : for thou shalt go to all that I shall send thee, and whatsoever I command thee thou shalt speak. Be not afraid of their Faces : for I am with thee, to deliver thee, saith the Lord, Jer. 1. 6, 7, 8.*

I observed above, that the Lord deals variously with different Persons, as to the Means and Manner of their Call ; but something of the Nature of these Things, is experienced by every one that he sends forth. They have such Views of the Condition that immortal Souls are in, and of the Glories of divine Truth, that they are constrained by divine Power, and are animated by Love to, and Zeal for the Good of the Children of Men, to go and (like *Apollos*) to speak, and teach diligently the Things of the Lord : and that not only in private, but also boldly in the Synagogue, *Acts* 18. 24, 25, 26. Or in great Assemblies, when they can have Opportunity : which is one great Means, by which God's People obtain Satisfaction of their being sent of Him ; and so bid them God-speed, as *Aquila*, and *Priscilla*, and the Brethren at *Ephesus* did to *Apollos*, Ver. 27.

CHAP. IV.

MARKS by which CHRIST's Ministers
may be known from all others.

IT is likely that many when they read this Discourse, may be ready to say, that to hold such a Call as I plead for, will open a Door for Intruders: for many deluded Souls may fancy themselves called of God, and how can we know who are called of God, and who not? Answer, Christ's Ministers may be known from all Deceivers under Heaven; First by their declaring the whole Counsel of God. Secondly, by their Lives being agreeable thereto. Thirdly, by their Master's coming with them, and assisting, and blessing of them in their Labours.

First, They may be known by their preaching the whole Counsel of God. Paul says of himself, and his Companions, *We are not as many that corrupt the Word of God*, 2 Cor. 2. 17. And again, *We have renounced the bidden Things of Dishonesty, not walking in Craftiness, nor handling the Word of God deceitfully, but by Manifestation of the Truth, commanding our selves to every Man's Conscience in the Sights of God*, Chap. 4. 2. Without

out a Man brings this, all the Commendations that Men can give, will never satisfy a serious Person's Conscience, that they are sent of God. 'Tis the Voice of a Stranger that Christ's Sheep will not follow, Joh. 10.

One great Difference between true and false Teachers, lies in the Manner of their attempting the Change, and Reformation of Men. All hold that Men should be *Holy*; and therefore Teachers in general, will in some sort labour to make them so: But then one begins at the outside, and the other within. Ignorant blind Guides will call Sinners to break off from gross Sins; to reform their Lives, and make a Profession of Religion, and the like; and then tell them that they are safe enough; at least that they are in a fair Way: and *so they heal the Hurt of the Daughter of God's People slightly, saying Peace, Peace, when there is no Peace*, Jer. 8. 11. But God's faithful Servants call Men to make them a new Heart, and a new Spirit, as they would escape eternal Death, Ezek. 18. 31. And also tell them that the Lord freely offers to do this great Work for them, *Chap. 36. 26*. This Difference is remarkable, clearly described by our Saviour, in his Discourse to the Jewish Teachers.--- *Thou blind Pharisee, cleanse FIRST that which is within,---that the outside may be clean also*, Matt. 23. 26. Here observe, both are for cleansing, but one would begin, (and indeed always continue) upon the outside: but the other begins at the Heart. Men must be created anew in Christ Jesus,

Jesus, in order for to do good Works, Eph. 2. 10. Hence faithful Ministers earnestly persuade Souls to fly immediately to Christ, and make no Delay. They tell them, Behold, Now is the accepted Time, and Now is the Day of Salvation, 2 Cor. 6. 1. And To Day if ye will hear his Voice, harden not your Hearts ; least the Lord swear in his Wrath that you shall not enter into his Rest, Heb. 3. 7. 8, 11. But blind Guides set Persons a long Task of seeking, and striving, and give them Encouragement that if they are found in the Way of Means, they shall obtain Salvation by and by : and thus they (like the Pharisees of old) set them to follow after Righteousness, in a Way that they are never like to attain unto the Law of Righteousness, and for this Reason, because they seek it not by Faith, but as it were by the Deeds of the Law, Rom. 9. 31, 32. They sew Pillows to all Arm-Holes, (Ezek. 13. 18.) for Souls to ease themselves upon, though they hang over Hell : and will apply the Promises in a false Manner ; as for instance, that Promise in James 1. 5. If any Man lack Wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not ; and it shall be given him : This they will apply to Sinners, without telling them that they must ask in Faith, or not expect to receive any Thing from the Lord : as the next Words shew, Ver. 6, 7.

Objection, But what would you have us say to Sinners that do not believe ? Must we bid them go on in Sin 'till God will convert them ?

Answer,

Answer, No, by no Means ; but call them to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, that they may be saved, Acts 16. 31.

Object. But they cannot believe.

Answer, Neither can they do good Works ; for without Faith it is impossible to please God, Heb. 11. 6. And whatsoever is not of Faith is Sin, Rom. 14. 23.

Object. But however, is it not better to tell Sinners to do as well as they can ?

Answer, Wouldest thou settle them down on their own Works, and so to lie under the Curse of God's Law ? Gal. 3. 10. In short, the Case lies here ; Sinners will not come to Christ that they might have Life, Joh. 5. 40. But they are putting off 'till a more convenient Season, Acts 24. 25. And they want to know which is best, either to go on in Duties, or in open Rebellion, 'till that Season comes. But there is no Place at all to rest in out of Christ ; for he that believeth not is condemned already :-- and the Wrath of God abideth on him, Joh. 3. 18, 36. Therefore Sinners are to be warned to fly for their Lives ; and not to tarry least they be consumed, Gen. 19 -- I mean not to beat Souls off from the Use of Means ; but I would beat them off from resting in any Thing short of a living Union to Christ, by which alone they can have any Safety. If the Manslayer should have fled never so far ; yea, even to the

Gate of the City of Refuge, and then had set down without the Walls, he would have been as much exposed to be slain, as if he had never gone a Step, Numb. 35. 11, 27.

And as there is a great Difference between true and false Teachers in the Manner of their attempting to turn Men to God; so there is as much Difference between them, in the Way of their holding forth the Terms of Acceptance with Him. The one declares that *we are justified by Faith without the Deeds of the Law*, Rom. 3. 28. And that *we are accepted only in the Beloved*, Eph. 1. 6. The other sets Souls to doing as well as they can, and to prepare themselves for Christ; and wait in the Way of Duty, and they may humbly hope that God will accept of them, and shew them Mercy by and by: it may be on a sick Bed, or just as they are going into Eternity. Indeed they do not tell Souls right off in plain Terms that they must be justified by their own Works; but *they go about to establish a Righteousness of their own*, Rom. 10. 3. And *seek Justification as it were by the Deeds of the Law*, Chap. 10. 31. The false Teachers among the Galatians would mention something about Christ, but then they insisted on their doing some *Works of the Law*, in order for Acceptance with Him, and so they preached another Gospel: which is not another; but they would pervert the Gospel of Christ, Gal. 1. 6, 7. The Gospel holds forth *Pardon, Justification, and Renewing Grace* intirely as a free Gift from God, Eph. 2. 8, 9, 10. And

the preparatory Work before Conversion, is quite another Thing than many conceive it to be. Many Teachers represent this to be, a *Fitness*, and some *good Qualifications* that a Person must get in himself, before he may think to come to Christ: and so they (as it were) set Souls to buy Christ, by their Tears, Repentings, &c. that Christ may buy Salvation for them. The preparatory Work that is wrought in the Soul before Conversion, is no more of an Excellency in the Creature; or Fitness for Grace and Mercy, than a Man's being brought to see and feel himself full of Sores, and dreadful Diseases, is any Qualification in him to be healed, *Luke 12. 32.* Or, than a Man's seeing that he is so involved in Debt that he can no ways deliver himself, is any Fitness in him to have his Debts all forgiven, *Luke 7. 42.* Every Sinner's Case before he comes to Christ, is much like that of the Woman with a *bloody Issue*: *She had suffered many Things of many Physicians, and had spent all that she had, and was Nothing bettered, but rather grew worse; then when she heard of Jesus, she came and was healed*, *Mark 5. 26, 27.* So Sinners that are polluted in their Blood (*Ezek. 16. 6.*) must be made to see, that notwithstanding all that they can do for themselves, or that others can do for them, their Case grows worse, before they will accept of Christ as he is offered in the Gospel.

Once more; as there is a great Difference between true and false Ministers, in the Manner of their essaying to turn Men to God; and in their

their teaching how they may be reconciled with Him : so there is as great Difference in the Method of their persuading Saints to walk in his Ways.

Christ's Ministers ever hold forth his Example, his dying Love, and the glorious Victory that he has gained, as the darling Motives to persuade his Disciples to walk in Holiness. When *Paul* would give a full Answer to that grand Objection against the Doctrines of Grace, that they lead to Licentiousness, he shews that as *Christ died unto Sin once, and rose again ; so we should reckon ourselves dead indeed unto Sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord*, Rom. 6-- And he tells the *Corinthians*, that the *Love of Christ constraineth us, because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: and that he died for all, that they which live, should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them, and rose again*, 2 Cor. 5. 14, 15.

But legal Teachers, tho' they mention Christ sometimes, yet their common Way of pressing home Duty upon God's People, is by representing the Danger of perishing if they do not persevere in a Way of Obedience. Like the Judaizing Teachers, that told the Saints, that *except they kept the Law of Moses they could not be saved*, which the Apostles call, a subverting their Souls, Acts 15. 24. And by the same Means, some Teachers among the *Galatians*, brought them Christians into Bondage; for which Reason

Paul

Paul says, *he would they were even cut off which troubled them : for (says he) Brethren, ye have been called unto Liberty,*--- Gal. 5. 12, 13. Saints have not received the Spirit of Bondage again to Fear : but have received the Spirit of Adoption, whereby they cry *Abba Father*, Rom. 8. 15. Indeed there is two sorts of Fear, the one right, the other wrong ; one flows from a Knowledge of God's Goodness : (*There is Forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared*, Psal. 130. 4.) The other from Guilt, and an Apprehension of God's Anger (*I heard thy Voice, and I was afraid*, Gen. 3. 10.) One of these is a Fountain of Life, to depart from the Snares of Death ; and it has strong Confidence in it, Prov. 14. 26, 27. The other keeps the Soul always in Slavery :--- *Through Fear of Death, they are all their Life time subject to Bondage*, Heb. 2. 15.

On the other Hand, there are some Teachers, as well as Hearers, that will exclaim against Legality, and pretend to cry up *Free Grace* greatly ; while in Reality, they turn the Grace of God into *Lasciviousness*, Jude 4. And though they make a great Sound of Liberty, yet they are in Truth, the Servants of Corruption, 2 Pet. 2. 19. But the Liberty of God's People, is to walk in his Precepts, (Psal. 119. 45.) and therefore Christ's Messengers teach, that not only the Law from Mount Sinai, but also the Grace of God that brings Salvation,---teaches us, that denying Ungodliness, and worldly Lusts, we should live soberly, righteously and godly, in this present World : and that they which have

have believed in the Lord, should be careful to maintain good Works, Tit. 2. 11, 12. and 3. 8.

Farther, False Teachers are like Pharaoh's Task-Masters, who required the full Tale of Bricks, but gave them no Straw, Exod. 5. 10. They lay heavy Burdens on Men's Shoulders, but will not touch them with one of their Fingers, Matt. 23. 4.

But the Messengers of Christ, not only lay open what our Duty is ; but also where our Strength lies to perform it, even in Christ as the Life of the Branch is in the Vine : And that thro' his strengthening of us, we can do all Things, Phil. 4. 13. That if any Man abides in the Doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son ; and he that brings not this Doctrine, we must not receive into our Houses, nor bid him God speed. 2 Joh. 9. 10.

Thus I have just hinted at some few of the most essential Points of Truth, by which God's Messengers may be known in their Doctrine, from all Deceivers. I come,

Secondly, To shew, that another Mark by which Christ's true Ambassadors may be known from all Deceivers, is by their practising what they preach. Elders are to be Examples to the Flock, Pet. 5. 3. And Paul could appeal to the Thessalonians, (1 Thes. 2. 5, 6, 8, 10.) that they were Witnesses, and God also, how holily, justly, and unblamably, he and his Companions had behaved among them: so that while others were after the Fleece, instead

instead of the Flock, he could appeal to God, *that they had not used a Cloak of Covetousness, nor sought Glory of Men*: but the Motive they were influenced by, was such a Love to their Souls, and Desire for their Salvation, that they were willing not to impart the Gospel only, but their own Souls also unto them.

Corrupt Ministers often are discovered by their Sloth, and fleshly Indulgencies; sleeping, lying down, loving to slumber: *Come, say they, I will fetch Wine, and we will fill ourselves with strong Drink, and to-morrow shall be as this Day, and much more abundant*, Isai. 56. 10, 12. They do not search after the Flock; but they feed themselves instead of the Flock, Ezek. 34....

But the Lord's Servants, approve themselves as his Ministers in much Patience, in Afflictions, in Necessities, in Distresses, in Stripes, in Imprisonments, in Tumults, in Labours, in Watchings, in Fastings, &c, 2 Cor. 6. 4, 5, 6,

Again, false Messengers will frame their Messages, and their Religion, so as to please carnal Men, and to get the Honours of this World. *Wo unto you (says Christ) when all Men shall speak well of you ; for so did their Fathers to the false Prophets*, Luke 6. 22, 26. But to his Disciples he says, *Blessed are ye when Men shall hate you, and reproach you, &c.*

Objection,

Objection, But we are told, that it is a necessary Qualification for a Gospel-Minister, that he have a good Report of them that are without, 1 Tim. 3. 7.

Answer, The Apostle there is speaking of Men's moral Conduct, of being sober, not given to Wine, not a Brawler, nor covetous, &c. But our Saviour is speaking of their Religion, and the Manner of their preaching: therefore these two may be clearly united in the same Person: as it was in *Daniel*. His Enemies, though they hated him, yet were forced to confess that they should find nothing against him, except it was concerning the Law of his God, Dan. 6. 5. So that in one Word, he that has not his moral Conduct in a good Measure clear before the World, is not fit for an Officer in the Church of God: And on the other Hand, he that has his Religion and his Preaching framed in such a Manner as to gain the Applause of the World, is in a woful Case.

Thirdly, Christ's Messengers may be known, by their Master's coming with them, to assist, and bless them in their Labours.--- This is promised in their Commission:--- *Lo I am with you alway, even unto the End of the World*, Matt. 28. 20. By him they are assisted to preach, not with insincere Words of Man's Wisdom, but in Demonstration of the Spirit, and of Power, 1 Cor. 2. 4. And by this the Lord said his Messengers should be known of old, when many ran before they were sent. Says

Says he, *The Prophet that bath a Dream, let him tell a Dream; and he that bath my Word, let him speak my Word faithfully: ---- Is not my Word like Fire? saith the Lord: and like a Hammer, that breaketh the Rock in Pieces, Jer. 23. 28, 29.* And when the Lord appears with his Servants, and blesseth their Labours for the Conviction and Conversion of Souls; it is a more sure Proof that they are sent of him, than if they had all the Letters of Commendation that Men could write. *We need not (says Paul to the Corinthians) Epistles of Commendation to you, or from you: Ye are our Epistle, &c. 2 Cor. 3. 1, 2, 3.* And again he says, *If I be not an Apostle to others, yet doubtless I am to you: for the Seal of mine Apostleship are ye in the Lord, 1 Cor. 9. 2.*

But there are two Objections that are often mentioned to disprove this Mark.

One is, That it will condemn some of God's faithful Servants, in old Time, who were sent to make hard Hearts harder, and blind Eyes blinder.

Answer, How can you harden Iron, but only by first heating of it? And how are God's Servants sent to harden Sinners, but only by being faithful to them; and then they by resisting Conviction and Warnings, harden their own Hearts against God, and his Truth. Thus *Pharaoh hardened his Heart from Time to Time: he was struck under Conviction by Moses's preaching and working Miracles, and then turned and resisted*

it, and so hardened his Heart more and more, see Exod. 8. 8, 15, &c. And thus all the Lord's Servants, while they are a *Savour of Life to some*; they are a *Savour of Death to others*, 2 Cor. 2. 16.

But then this makes nothing against the Mark that we are pleading for,--- for those who harden their Hearts against God and his Truth, are not likely to receive his Messengers: but those that imbrace Christ, will know and receive them that he sends, Matt. 10. 41.

The other Objection that many urge against this Mark is, that Deceivers may do great Things, *Propheſie, cast out Devils, &c.* and therefore we cannot know Christ's Servants by their Assistance and Success.

Answer, It is true, that *Balaam* had the Spirit of God upon him for a while, and spake wonderfully; and *Saul* was among the Prophets, &c. But then they were soon discovered, by their Fruits: yea, in the very Time of their Prophe-cying, there appeared plain Marks of a corrupt Disposition of Mind, and that what they did was contrary to their Souls Choice. *Balaam* loved the *Wages of Unrighteousness*, 2 Pet. 2. 15; which plainly appeared then, by his going from Place to Place, to try if God would not alter his Mind, so that he might curse *Israel* at last, and get *Balaam's Reward*, Numb. 23---And it appeared plain that what *Saul* was after, was to kill *David*, but

the Spirit of God came upon him so that he could not do it, *1 Sam. 14. 23, 24.*

The Spirit of God may sometimes bless what is spoken by corrupt Men for the Good of others: but I believe not so commonly as many would represent; and this Point of false-hearted Men's doing great Things on the Bodies and Souls of Men, I think is strained vastly beyond what is true, by many in this Generation.

Many say that Deceivers may work Miracles, and convert many Souls, &c. And they will quote such Places to prove it as that in Matth. 7. 22. *Many will say---Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy Name? and in thy Name have cast out Devils? and in thy Name done many wonderful Works?....* And that in 1 Cor. 13. 2. *Though I have the Gift of Prophecie, --- and though I have all Faith, so that I could remove Mountains, and have not Charity, I am nothing.*

But after a great deal of searching the Scriptures, and seeking divine Instructions in these Things, it appears to me, that in that Place of our Saviour, he is shewing Persons Deceptions and false Confidence, rather than that it was indeed so. They say, *Have we not cast out Devils, &c.---* Christ does not say they had; but says, *I know you not, depart from me,---* And in that Passage of the Apostle, he is shewing how far Charity (or divine Love) exceeds all Gifts that Men may have here: and that if Persons could have

all those Gifts to the highest Degree, and yet had not Charity, it would profit them nothing.---Yea he also prefers Charity above *saving Faith*, and a *good Hope*, Ver. 13. But then if we consider what he says in the foregoing Chapter concerning Gifts, I think it will appear plain, that the Apostle is speaking of the Gifts that belong to Saints, that are all of one Body ; and have all been made to drink into one Spirit, Ver. 12, 13. and not of what deluded Souls may have.

But as to corrupt Men's working Miracles, and doing much Good to others, though their Heart be not right with God ; I believe that they and others are generally as much deceived about the Good that they do, as they are about their being true Men.

Christ says, *Take heed that no man deceive you ; for there shall arise false Christs, and false Prophets, and shall shew great Signs and Wonders, insomuch that (if it were possible) they shall DECEIVE the very Elect*, Matt. 24. 4, 24. The Signs and Wonders are false, as well as the Men that do them : which appears more evident, if we compare this with what Paul says to the *Thessalonians*, concerning the same Enemy : Says he, *Whose coming is after the working of Satan, with all Power and Signs, and LYING Wonders : and with all DECEIVABLENESS of Unrighteousness in them that perish*, 2 Thess. 2. 9, 10.

Thus I have in Simplicity spoken my Mind upon

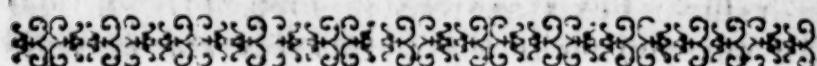
upon these Things : and considering what is spoken concerning Sceva's Sons attempting to cast out Devils in Christ's Name ; and the Confusion that they met with therein, *Acts 19. 13--16.* And on the other Hand, that those who did in Reality cast them out in Christ's Name ; he tells them to *rejoyce that their Names were written in Heaven*, *Luke 10. 17, 20.* I say, considering these and many other such like Things in Scripture, I must freely own that it appears to me a very hard Thing to prove, that in Reality there ever was such a Thing as an unsanctified Man's being properly the Instrument of healing any Person's Body that was possessed with the Devil, in a miraculous Way.

But this is not so much to our present Purpose ; for the healing of Men's Bodies is but a small Thing, to the healing of the Soul ; which is the main Thing that I am after. Therefore to return :-- This Point still stands good, that it is one very clear Proof that a Man is sent of God, to preach the Gospel, when his Master comes with him, and assists and blesseth him in his Labours for the Conversion and Edification of Souls. And whatever may be said of unconverted Men's having the Spirit of God upon them, and of their speaking wonderfully : yet Men must raise a pretty many Texts out of the Bible, before they can make that Doctrine to stand good which many assert, *That a Man may be instrumental of turning many to God, and yet may afterwards perish forever.* What will these Men do with

with such Texts as that in Prov. 11. 30. *He that wineth Souls is wise: And they that be wise, shall shine as the Brightness of the Firmament: and they that turn many to Righteousness, as the Stars for ever and ever?* Dan. 12. 3.

Indeed this, as well as other Truths, may, and undoubtedly is, abused by some: as when any hold, that when the Lord is with and blesseth a Person, that then, all which they hold and practise is right:--- This is a very gross Mistake, for Men are always (in a greater or less Degree) imperfect, both in their Principles and Practice, while in this imperfect State. But then it is the strongest Proof that we can have, that a Man is sent of God into this Work, when the Lord himself comes with him, and says to him (as he does to all his Messengers) *He that receiveth you, receiveth me; and he that receiveth me, receiveth him that sent me,* Matt. 10. 40.

This Head includes both of the other: for a Man cannot preach God's Truth clearly and as he ought, nor practice agreeable thereto; neither is he like to be successful in his Labours, without having God present with him.--- The Lord says of Levi, *He walked with me in Peace and Equity, and did turn many away from Iniquity,* Mal. 2. 6.



C H A P. V.

OBJECTIONS *answered.*

WHEN any Point of Truth is held up which has been generally shut out by Mankind in Time past, it is a common Thing to have many Objections raised against it. Therefore (though I know that a Man may as easily stop the Winds from blowing with his Words, as to still all the Cavals of such as do not love to receive the Truth, yet for the Good of Persons that have a more serious Mind) I will here set down as short and clear an Answer as I can, to the most material Objections that I have heard mentioned against the Call which I have been pleading for in this Discourse.

Objection I. In this Discourse you seem to set them which you hold to be Christ's Ministers, up equal to the Prophets and Apostles who were called in an extraordinary Way.

Answer 1. All true Ministers of Christ now, are sent forth by the same eternal God that the Prophets and Apostles were, and therefore they have received their Call and Commission made clear and sealed to them.

to them by the Work of the same Spirit on their Hearts; and those that have not this, let them not pretend to be Messengers from the same divine King. But then I observed before, that there were some Things in the Call and Work of God's Servants of old that we have not now; especially in their being called, and inspired to write the Scriptures. Yet we may, and ought to reach after as great and greater Degrees of Grace and Strength to act for God, and to labour for the Advancement of his Kingdom, than they had in old Time. *David* was an eminent Servant of the Lord, and did Wonders among his People: but yet God says concerning his Church in latter Times, that *the feeble among them at that Day, shall be as David; and the House of David shall be as God, as the Angel of the Lord before them*, Zech. 12. 8.

Answ. 2. I will appeal to all Men of Reason and Conscience to judge, who sets themselves up equal to (nay above) the Prophets and Apostles; those who hold that they are not fit to be God's Counsellors, nor to appoint whom he shall have for his Messengers; but that they are only to own and receive whomsoever he sends: Or they which declare that the Power is now left in their Hands to authorize Gospel-Ministers; and that all who preach without their Licence, *run before they are sent*: which Power never was given to the Servants of God heretofore; and when the Disciples went to assume it, Christ severely checked them therefor, Mark. 9. 38, 39.

Objection,

Objection, II. But the Apostle seems to hold forth, that since the Days of Inspiration are ceased, the Work is put into the Hands of Ministers to ordain others, and so the Power is transmitted down in an ordinary Way: hence he says to *Timothy*, *The Things that thou has heard of me among many Witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful Men, who shall be able to teach others also*, 2 Tim. 2. 2.

Answ. This Text proves clearly, that Gospel Ministers should be ordained, and publickly set apart in the Church, and I have no where denied it. Also it gives the Character of the Persons that are to be ordained. *They must be faithful Men, or Men full of Faith and the Holy Ghost*, Acts 6. 5. Which at once cuts off the Notion of unconverted Men's being Ministers of Christ. They are called of God, and made faithful in his Work before they can be rightly received and ordained as Officers in his Church. Now as to where the Right of Ordination lies, whether in Minister by themselves, or in them and the Church as a united Body together:--- this is another Question which I shall not enter upon here. † A Man being internally called of God is one Thing; and his being openly received, and set apart in the Church is quite another: and I defy all Men under Heaven to prove from Scripture, that God

† See this Point clearly handled in Ebenezer Frothingham's Discourse on the Privileges of the Church of Christ. Printed at Newport 1750. p. 163. 204

has any more left it in the Hands of any mortal Men whatsoever to say who shall be his Ministers, and who not, than he has to say who shall be his Children and who not. The Argument that is raised from the Scriptures being compleat, is as good in one Case as the other. For it is no more recorded in the Bible that this, or that Person is, or ever shall be converted, than it is that this, or that Man is, or shall be called to preach the Gospel. We have plain Marks given us whereby we may know them that the Lord has called into the Kingdom of his Grace: and so we have also Rules whereby we may know them that he has called to be his Messengers.

But if it be true, that the Lord does not now by his divine Spirit, as really shew his Children their standing, or their Duty, and the Work that he calls them to, as he did to his Servants of old: then why do we talk of the Bible's being a Privilege, for we are vastly worse of it than they were before it was written? Alas! the Darkness that has overspread the World in these Days! Darkness that may be felt. Yet, blessed be the Lord, he will cause his Light and Glory to shine upon his People, though Darkness covers the Earth, &c.

ai. 60.

Objection III. Some may yet say, That to hold such an internal Call as this, will destroy all Order in the Church, for when Men get a Notion that they are called of God, they will not only

preach, but also administer the Ordinances, and run into all manner of Confusion, and none can controul them.

Answe. 1. This is no just Consequence at all, for it is plain that the Holy Ghost commanded the Church at *Antioch* to separate two Men for a Work whereunto he had called them; which was to *go and preach and baptize among the Gentiles*: In Obedience to which the Church publickly ordained them, *Acts 13. 2, 3.* And yet one of them Persons tells us, that long before this he had such a Call by God's Spirit, *that he did not confer with Flesh and Blood*; neither go to them that were Apostles before him, but he went directly to preaching, *Gal. 1. 15, 16, 17.*

Answe. 2. The Reason and Nature of the Thing shews plainly, that holding to an internal Call, no ways invalidates external Ordination in the least: for as when a Soul is converted, though he has an internal Right to all the Privileges of the Church of Christ; yet he has not an external Right thereto, 'till he is openly received as a Member: So a Person that is called to preach, has not a Right to act in those Things which are peculiar to an Officer in the Church, 'till he is publickly set apart therein.

Praying, exhorting, and Preaching, though they are Duties to be performed in the Church, yet they are not so confined thereto, but that they may be rightly

rightly performed where there is no particular Church at all: which might be easily shewn, were it needful to stand upon it. But the administering of special Ordinances, and acting in Church Discipline, are Things peculiar to a visible Church, and therefore we cannot clearly act in them without we have a visible standing therein, as an Officer, or a Member. — *For what have I to do to judge them that are without? Do not ye judge them that are within?* 1 Cor. 5. 12.

Objection IV. But if you hold that you have the same Call with the Prophets and Apostles, why don't you work Miracles as they did to confirm your Mission?

Answ. I hinted before, that many Miracles and great Things which were wrought by God's Servants of old, were chiefly done to confirm the Truth of the Tidings which they brought, to such as had not received those Parts of God's Word before. Thus the Apostle to the Hebrews, in mentioning the great Salvation, *which began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him,* says, *God also bearing them Witness, both with Signs and Wonders, and divers Miracles, and Gifts of the Holy Ghost,* Heb. 2. 3, 4. So when the Apostles first went forth, *the Lord confirmed the WORD with Signs following,* Mark 16. 20. From which it plainly appears, that those Things were chiefly given to confirm the Messages which they brought, though undoubtedly there was a Confirmation

mation of the Messengers Mission contained therein. But in our Days, when Men declare Things concerning the great Salvation ; Unbelievers have as good Reason to demand a Miracle to prove that what they say is true, as Cavillers have to say, If you are thus sent forth by the Lord, confirm your Mission by some extraordinary Sign.

And further, it is very evident that the Apostles looked upon their Success in converting Souls, to be a far greater, and more certain Proof of their being sent of God, than all the Miracles which they wrought on Men's Bodies. Thus when *Paul* would mention to the *Corinthians* an undeniabie Evidence of his being an Apostle of Christ, he says, *The Seal of mine Apostleship are ye in the Lord*, 1 Cor. 9. 2. and 2 Cor. 3. 1—3. So that those who have the Scripture Marks which are mention'd above, bring the clearest Evidences of their being sent of Christ that we can have.

Objection V. You speak much concerning a Minister's Call, but say little about his Qualifications, which is the main Thing ; for a Man must have Learning and the understanding of the original Tongues, or else he does not know whether he preaches right or wrong.

Answ. 1. If a Man's having the Treasure of God's Word open'd and committed to his Soul ; and having such a View of the Worth of Souls, as to be constrained by divine Power and Love, to go

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and spend his Life and Strength for God's Glory, and in labouring for their Good: (2 Cor. 5. 14 Job. 21. 15, 16, 17 2 Cor. 12. 15.) I say, if these Things are not Gospel Qualifications, I know not what are; yea such necessary Qualifications, as that without them, if a Man had all the Learning that Men can give, he would be no ways fit for this great Work.

Answ. 2. As to the Knowledge of the original Tongues, though I do not despise it; for no doubt that may be improved to some Benefit, under the Influence of the Spirit of God: Yet I am far from thinking it to be so essentially necessary as many would represent.

For though I have heard many (both Ministers and others) assert, that without the Knowledge of the original Tongues, a Man could not know whether he preached Truth, or Falshood: yet I shall not only assert, but prove, that every Saint now has the same Way to know the Truth and Certainty of God's Word that his People had of old: without which all the Learning in this World, will never bring any Man to know certainly the Truth of the Scriptures.

Christ told his Disciples that *the Spirit of Truth would guide them into all Truth*, Joh. 16. 13. And when the Jews said of him, *How knoweth this Man letters, having never learned?* Christ (after asserting that his Doctrine was not his own, but his that sent

sent him) says, *If any Man will do his Will, he shall know of the Doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself,* Joh. 7. 17. The Way that the Theſſalonians knew, and received the Gospel not as the Word of Man, but (as it is in Truth) the Word of God, was by its coming to them in Power, and in the HOLY GHOſT, and in much Assurance,

1 Theſſ. 2. 13. and 1. 5. Once more; Paul tells the Corinθians (who reckoned as much upon Learning and Wisdom as many do in this Day) *That he determined to know nothing among them, save Jesus Christ and him crucified,* and (says he) *my Speech, and my Preaching was not with enticing Word of Man's Wisdom, but in Demonstration of the Spirit and of Power.* And again, *What Man knows the Things of a Man, save the Spirit of Man that is in him?* Even so the Things of God knoweth no Man but the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the Spirit of the World, but the Spirit which is of God, that we might know the Things that are freely given to us of God. Which Things also we speak not in the Words which Man's Wisdom teacheth, but which the HOLY GHOſT teacheth; comparing spiritual Things with spiritual. But the natural Man receiveth not the Things of the Spirit of God; for they are Fooliſhneſſ unto him; neither can he know them, because they are ſpiritually diſcerned, 1 Cor. 2. 2, 4, 11—14.

This is the only Way by which God's People in every Age have known the Truth and Certainty of his Word: which hath been given in to

Protestants

Protestants in general both at Home and Abroad since the Reformation.— The *Westminster Confession of Faith*, after mentioning sundry Arguments that may induce us to believe the Scriptures, say, “ Yet notwithstanding our full Perswasion and Assurance of the infallible Truth, and divine Authority thereof, is from the inward Work of the Holy Spirit, bearing Witness by and with the Word in our Hearts.” *Chap. 1. Sect. 5.*

If we cannot know certainly that the Bible is true, without understanding of *Hebrew, Greek and Latin* (which Pilate set over Christ’s Head, when he was crucified, *Luke 23. 38. Mat. 27. 37.*) then alas ! we are in a woful Case indeed : for (according to this) if we hear a Man preach, that says he knows not only them Tongues, but twenty more beside, and he tells us that this or that is Truth ; we have only a Man’s Testimony for it : and God says we worship him in vain, when our Fear is caught by the Precepts of Men, *Psal. 29. 31.* compar’d with *Matth. 15. 9.* But it is the common Privilege of God’s People (and then much more of his Messengers) to have the divine Spirit given them, to seal his Truth to their Hearts ; without which, if a Person has never so many of the learned Tongues, how does he know that them Books which we call the Word of God, are not *cunningly devised Fables*, and nothing but a Piece of Priest-Craft ? as some Men of great human Learning really call them. Or if he allows that they were first written by the Direction of God’s Spirit, yet how

how does he know that they have not been altered since ; for he has not the first Copies ? If it should be said, that great Care has been taken to transmit them down to us without any Alteration. I answer, so has there been great Care and Pains used in translating them into our Language as exactly as possible.

As for the Argument that many bring from the Apostles having the miraculous Gift of Tongues given them, to prepare them to preach among the Gentiles,—for to prove that Men must learn these Tongues now, before they may preach among us ; I can see no Reason in it at all. To them was given the Knowledge of the Peoples Languages, that they were to preach to : and so undoubtedly Persons now must have some clear understanding of the Meaning and Use of the Tongue he speaks in, or else he will be a Barbarian to his Hearers, and they to him, *1 Cor. 14. 11.* This Argument is much stronger to prove that Men in our Land ought to learn the *Indian* Tongue, or other Languages in these Parts of the World, before they preach, that they might be able to hold forth Salvation to such poor Souls ; than it is to prove that Men must learn *Hebrew, Greek and Latin*, before they may preach to English Hearers. But some will say, that though the Bible is very well translated into our Language, yet a clear understanding of the original Tongues may be of Benefit ; as a Person thereby may be able to view the different Readings that there are in some Places, and so may illustrate

illustrate some Things more clearly than others can.

To which I reply, that I allowed this before, that such Knowledge may by the Help of the divine Spirit, be improved for the Good of others : but then that is no Argument against every one's improving the Gift which God has given him : for each Soul will have a dreadful Account to give up, if they do not faithfully improve every Talent which their Master hath given into their Hands, *Matt. 25. 15. Luke 19. 13.* Yet let no Man pretend to what he has not ; nor put what he has in a wrong Place : both of which are Abomination to the Lord. Spare me a Word to each of these, and I will have done with this Head.

First, Let no Man pretend to that he has not ; which certainly is the Case of some, if not many in this Land, with Regard to this Matter. They pretend that none may preach without they understand the original Tongues : and yet many take their Degrees at College, and are ordained, who have no clear understanding of the *Hebrew Tongue* at all (in which above half the Bible was written) so that according to their own Plea, they must never preach out of the Old Testament : if they do, they know not whether they preach right or wrong. And further, sundry Persons that have gone thro' the College, and are well acquainted with these Things, I have heard own, that there is not one to ten among their Scholars that are such Masters

of the original Tongues, as to be able to make any Corrections, if in any Places the Scriptures are not translated exactly right: but they possibly will read the Remarks of some learned Expositor (which common Englishmen can read) and then impose upon the common People, with a Pretence of knowing much about the original of the Bible.

Again,

Secondly, What Learning Men have is often put in a wrong Place,—namely, to supply the want of the Spirit of God, who alone can teach us all Things, as no Man can teach us, 1 Job. 2. 27. *But the World by Wisdom knew not God*, 1 Cor. 1. 21. Many seem to make more of human Wisdom and Learning, than of the Spirit of God, to lead them into an understanding of his Word; which naturally leads to that which *Isaiah* speaks of, that in a great Measure is actually the Case in our Day: to wit,

“ That the Mysteries of the Scriptures become to
 “ all as a sealed Book; which the unlearned say
 “ they cannot read because they are not learned;
 “ and the Learned cannot read because it is sealed.
 “ Therefore (the Lord said) behold, I will pro-
 “ ceed to do a marvellous Work amongst this Peo-
 “ ple, even a marvellous Work and a Wonder:
 “ for the Wisdom of their wise Men shall perish,
 “ and the understanding of their prudent Men shall
 “ be hid. Wo unto them that seek deep to hide
 “ their Counsel from the Lord, and their Works
 “ are in the Dark; and they say, who seeth us?
 “ and who knoweth us? Surely your turning of
 “ Things upside down shall be esteemed as the
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" Potters Clay :— In that Day shall the deaf hear
" the Words of the Book, and the Eyes of the
" blind shall see out of Obscurity, and out of Dark-
" ness. The Meek also shall increase their Joy in
" the Lord, and the POOR among Men shall
" rejoice in the Holy One of Israel, *Isai. 29. 11,*
" 12, 14,—16, 18, 19.

One Objection more I will speak a little to, and then draw toward a close.

Objection VI. Many *Enthusiasts* and deluded People have held to such a Call as you speak of, but none that have been accounted sound and orthodox Divines in latter Days, have pretended to any such Thing.

Answ. 1. That many People have held false Notions about a Call to preach the Gospel, is an undoubted Truth to me ; and many have run into great Delusions concerning such Things : but then that is no more of a good Argument against this, than it is against all Religion. There is no Point in experimental Religion, as I know of, but what has been abused : and how many awful Delusions have some run into concerning Conversion, and the Teachings of God's Spirit, in every Age ? Yet that is no Argument against the Reality of Religion at all : for if *Hymenius* and *Pbiletus*, and a thousand more, run into never so great Errors, and overthrow the *Faith* of some : yet nevertheless, the Foundation of

of God standeth sure, having this Seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his, 2 Tim. 2. 19.

Answ. 2. If none that have been esteemed sound Divines in latter Ages have held to such a Call by the Spirit of God,— What Warrent did the first Reformers from *Popery* go upon in preaching before there were Protestant Churches gathered? If any say, they were ordained by the Papists, I reply, that if they had no better Call than Antichrist could give them, they went upon a very poor Authority. And farther, it is an undoubted Truth that the same Power that can give a Commission, can take it away: and it is certain that the Pope did his utmost, not only to depose them, but also to destroy their Lives if possible; yet still they went on boldly in preaching in their Master's Name, notwithstanding all the Rage of Earth and Hell.

And if the first Reformers in *England* did not hold to such an internal Call, what did they mean by insisting upon it, that every one which they ordained, should profess, *that he was inwardly moved by the HOLY GHOST to take that Work upon him?*— I doubt not but many of them knew experimentally what it was to be called and inwardly moved by the Holy Ghost, to go into that great Work of preaching the Gospel, though I fear that many who have used that Form of Words since, have not known neither what they said, nor whereof they affirmed.

One particular Instance of an internal Call, I will here set down, which was experienced about an hundred Years ago, by one who, though he be despised by some learned Men, yet is generally esteemed and looked upon among the Godly, as a very excellent Writer, and an eminent Servant of Jesus Christ : *John Bunyan*, in giving an Account of God's Dealings with him (in his Book intitled *Grace abounding, &c.*) after mentioning the earnest Desires of many, that he should preach, says, that " about that Time he did evidently find in his Mind a secret pruking forward thereto ; though (says he) I bless God, not from a Desire of Vain-Glory, for at that Time I was most sorely afflicted with the fiery Darts of the Devil concerning my eternal State. But yet could not be content unless I was found in the Exercise of my Gift, unto which I was greatly animated, not only by the continual Desires of the Godly, but also by that Saying of *Paul* to the *Corinthians*, *I beseech you Brethren* (ye know the Household of *Stephanus*, that it is the first Fruits of *Achaia*, and that they have addicted themselves to the Ministry of the Saints) that ye submit yourselves unto such, and to every one that helpeth with us, and laboreth, 1 Cor. 16. 51, 16.— By this Text I was made to see that the Holy Ghost never intended, that Men who have Gifts, and Abilities, should bury them in the Earth, but rather did command and stir up such to the Exercise of their Gift, and also did command those that were apt so to do. They have addicted themselves to the Ministry of " the

“ *the Saints* : this Scripture in those Days did con-
“ tinually run in my Mind, to encourage me, and
“ strengthen me, in this my Work for God. I
“ have also been encouraged from several other
“ Scriptures, and Examples of the Godly, both
“ specified in the Word, and other ancient Histo-
“ ries. *Acts* 8. 4. and 13. 24, 25. *1 Pet.* 4. 10.
“ *Rom.* 12. 6. *Fox's Acts and Monuments.*”

And further on he says, “ Though I will not
“ now speak all that I know in this Matter, yet
“ my Experience hath more Interest in that Text
“ of Scripture, *Gal.* 1. 11, 12. than many amongst
“ Men are aware.”

Much more might be said here, but I shall not stand upon it now, because that though serious People do not slight and disregard the Practice of the Godly in past Ages, yet when viewing Things aright, they will follow them as far, and no farther than they followed Christ. The Scriptures plainly represent that the Church of God in these latter Days, will get Victory over the Corruptions of Antichrist gradually, and by Degrees.

They get Victory, first over the *Beast*; then over his *Image*; thirdly, over his *Mark*, and lastly over the *Number of his Name*. *Rev.* 15. 2.

That allowing the Case, that many of the Fathers had not so clear Views of the Nature of these Things, yet that is no just Objection against what

has been here said, unless this can be made appear to be contrary to God's Word. To this purpose I shall here set down a Passage from Mr. *Robinson*, who was the first Pastor of the Church that came first to *New England*, and settled in *Plymouth*. Part of the Church came over from *Holland* before the other, and Mr. *Robinson* stayed behind with the rest: And at their parting,

Governor *Winflow* says, † "He charged us before God and his blessed Angels, to follow him no further than he followed Christ. And if God should reveal any thing to us by any other Instrument of his, to be as ready to receive it, as ever we were to receive any Truth by his Ministry: for he was very confident the Lord had more Truth and Light yet, to break forth out of his holy Word. He took Occasion also miserably to bewail the state of the reformed Churches who were come to a Period in Religion, and would go no further than the Instruments of their Reformation. As for Example, the *Lutherans* could not be drawn to go beyond what *Luther* saw; for whatever part of God's Word he had further revealed to *Calvin*, they had rather die than embrace it; and so said he, you see the *Calvinists*, they stick where he left them, a Misery much to be lamented: for though they were precious, shining Lights in their Times; yet God had not revealed his whole

† See Mr. Prince's *New England Chronology*. P. 80, 96.

" Will

“ Will to them : and were they now alive, said he ;
“ they would be as ready to embrace further Light,
“ as that they had received. Here also he put us
“ in mind of our Church-Covenant ; whereby we
“ engaged with God and one another, to receive
“ whatever Light, or Truth should be made
“ known to us from his written Word. But withal
“ exhorted us to take heed what we received for
“ Truth ; and well to examine, compare and weigh
“ it with other Scriptures before we receive it. For
“ said he, it is not possible the Christian World
“ should come so lately out of such Antichristian
“ Darkness, and that full perfection of Knowledge
“ should break forth at once.”

These are the Sentiments of my Heart ; and according to this, let what I have here written be tried. If I have said any thing contrary to the Scriptures of Truth, let it be condemned ; if not, what does a thousand Traditions of Men avail to overthrow it ? — *All Flesh is Grafts, and all the Goodliness thereof is as the Flower of the Field. — The Grass withereth, the Flower fadeth : but the Word of our God shall stand forever.* Isaiah 40. 6, 8.



CHAP. VI.

*Some Improvement of the whole, with
Observations on the Principles and
Practices of many in this Age, con-
cerning these Things.*

I Shall now close this Discourse with some few
Reflections on what has been said.

USE I. Is it so, that Christ's Messengers now
have essentially the same Call that all his Servants
had of old? We may hence see the woful and
lamentable Case of many in this Generation, who
have (in a great Measure, if not wholly) set aside
the Work of God's Spirit, and the Kingly Autho-
rity of Jesus Christ, in calling and sending forth his
Ministers, and have set up mortal Man in his
Room: — which appears evident in these follow-
ing Particulars.

1. In that they hold, that Christ has now left it
with his Ministers to Licence and send forth others,
and that whoever goes to preach without that, run

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before

before they are sent. They do not only hold that Preachers should be examined by the Church and Ministers of Christ; and so be received, and publickly ordained, if they are found faithful; or be rejected if otherwise, (which I believe is agreeable to Gospel Rule) but they also hold, that it is this alone that gives them their Commission and Authority. Hence I have often heard it, both from the Pulpit, and in Conversation asserted, that *The Call of Man is the Call of God.* — Which I take to be a most horrid Way of setting Man up in God's Place.

Indeed we all hold that God sometimes speaks by his Spirit, in and through his People: and what is thus spoken is his Voice. He told *Elijah* that he should anoint [or call forth] *Elisha* to be Prophet in his Room. *1 Kings 19. 16.* And I think it appears evident, that *Timothy* was thus called forth, if we compare *Acts 16. 3.* *Him would Paul have to go forth with him;* — with *1 Tim. 1. 18.* *This Charge I commit unto thee, Son Timothy,* according to the PROPHECIES which went before on thee. And again, *Neglect not the Gift that is in thee,* which was given thee by PROPHECY; with the laying on of the Hands of the Presbytery, chap. 4. 14. And I suppose it is generally allowed that Mr. *Davidson* was guided by the divine Spirit, when he charged Mr. *John Ker* (a young Gentleman who had no Thoughts of the Ministry before) to cast off his Scarlet Cloak, and lay aside his gilded Rapier, and take him to his Book, “ For (said he) “ you

“ you are the Man who is to succeed me in the Ministry at this place.” Which accordingly came to pass. † God also often teaches and guides his People in a more ordinary Way: but then to say that whatever is acted by his professing People is the Voice of God, is notoriously false. Many were called Prophets among God’s People of old, which they chose, and loved their Preaching, that yet he says, *They ran, but he sent them not, nor commanded them.* Compare *Jer. 5. 31*, with *Chap. 23. 21, 32.* Yea the greatest Saints often are mistaken. Samuel’s looking on the stately Appearance of Jesse’s eldest Son, and saying, *Surely the Lord’s anointed is before him,* *1 Sam. 16. 6.* did not make Eliab to be the Leader that God chose for his People. —

But notwithstanding the best of Men are such frail Creatures, yet Mr. *Fish* of *Stonington* is so bold as to assert (after commenting a while on that Text, *Tim. 2. 1, 2.*) that “ Christ Jesus does not commit the preaching of the Gospel to any Man, since the Apostles, but by the Instrumentality of others.” * He holds, that Christ himself committed this Work to the Apostles, and to his first Ministers, but not to any now, only through and by Instruments. Which Scheme, as I believe it to be grounded upon Tradition, and not upon

† *Vid. Fulfilling of the Scripture; Boston Edition, P. 411.*

* See his *Sermon at Mr. Vinal’s Ordination at Newport, October 29. 1746. P. 25. 26.*

Scripture: So it evidently (like their Traditions of old) crosses God's Commandment; or in other Words; they make void God's Law to keep their own Traditions.

This you may see something of in what Mr. *Edwards* says of these Things, in his Thoughts on the Work of God in *New England*, 1741,2. P. 264. &c. He holds it to be an Error for any to think " That the Gospel-Ministry need not to be limited as it used to be, to Persons of a liberal Education; (says he) some of late have been for having others that they have supposed to be Persons of eminent Experience, publickly licenced to preach, yea and ordained to the Work of the Ministry; and some Ministers have seemed to favour such a Thing: but how little do they seem to look forward and consider the unavoidable Consequences of opening such a Door? — It will be found of absolute Necessity that there should be some certain visible Limits fixed, to avoid bringing Odium upon our selves, and breeding Uneasiness and Strife amongst others; and I know of none better, and indeed no other that can well be fixed, than those that the Prophet *Zechariah* fixes, viz. that those only should be appointed to be Pastors, or Shepherds in God's Church, that have been taught to keep Cattle from their Youth; or that have had an Education for that Purpose.—Not but that there may probably be some Persons in the Land, that have had no Education at College, that are in them.

" themselves BETTER QUALIFIED for the Work
" of the Ministry than some others that have taken
" their Degrees, and are now Ordained. But yet
" I believe the breaking over those Bounds that
" have hitherto been set, in ordaining such Per-
" sons would in its Consequences be a greater Ca-
" lamity, than the missing such Persons in the
" Work of the Ministry." Thus far he.—Now
though I highly esteem this Man, as an eminent
Servant of the Lord, and believe the main of that
Book to be clear Truth: yet I desire never to
have such an esteem of any Man, as to take what
they say for Truth, when it appears evidently to
be contrary to God's Word: which I think is
the Case here.

He mentions *Zeck. 13. 5.* as a Description of
Gospel Ministers: but I rather think, with the
excellent Mr. *Flavel*, that it describes a false Tea-
cher. — Mr. *Flavel* speaking of false Teachers,
says, " We find in a clear Prophecy of Gospel
" Times, what shame God will pour upon them,
" *Zeck. 13. 4, 5.* They shall be brought with
" shame enough to confess, *I am no Prophet, I*
" *am an Husbandman; for Man taught me to keep*
" *Cattle from my Youth.*" †

This is evidently the genuine Meaning of that
Text, if we compare it with the foregoing Words.
In ver. 1. God says, *He will open a Fountain to*

† *Flavel's Works.* Vol. I. P. 634.

cleanse

cleanse his People from Sin and Uncleanness: and ver. 2. mentions in particular, that he will take away the Idols and false Prophets: ver. 3. he says, *The Prophets own Parents shall rise against him; yea, he himself shall be ashamed of his Vision,—And he shall say, I am no Prophet; for Man taught me to keep Cattle from my Youth:* q. d. ‘I own I never was sent of God; but I had my Education and Commission only from Man.’ Agreeable to this, is what *Paul* says to *Timothy*, when he charged him to be faithful in preaching the Gospel, — *For, (say, he) the Time will come when they will not endure sound Doctrine; but after their own Lusts shall keep to themselves Teachers, having itching Ears,* 2 Tim. 4. 3. i. e. Men will get to that, as to hold that they can educate and commission their Ministers themselves; — and when they have made them, the Work which they do is, by fleshly Wisdom, to please itching Ears; rather than by manifestation of the Truth to commend themselves to every Man’s Conscience in the sight of God, 2 Cor. 4. 2.

Note one Thing here, and that is, it seems remarkable that when a good Man, (as I take Mr. *Edwards* to be) undertook to vindicate a false Scheme, the main Text he brings to support it, is that which properly describes a Deceiver. — And as it seems plain that here he misconstrues Scripture; so I think it is as evident, that in what follows he lays down a Plan contrary to Scripture.

God’s

God's Word says, *Having Gifts differing, let us improve them,—whether Propheſie, let us propheſie according to the Proportion of Faith: or Ministry, let us wait on our ministring; or be that teacheth, on teaching; or be that exhorteth, on Exhortation,* Rom. 6. 7, 8. And again, *As every Man hath received the Gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good Stewards of the manifold Grace of God. If any Man speak, let him speak as the Oracles of God; if any Man minister, let him do it as of the Ability which God giveth: that God in all Things might be glorified through Jesus Christ,* 1 Pet. 4. 10. 11.

But Mr. Edwards (and a great many others) say that if Persons don't get their Gifts and Abilities at College, though they may be better qualified for the Work of the Ministry, than some others that have taken their Degrees, and are ordained; yet they may not be received: and why? Because it will break over the Bounds that have been set:— Not by God, for his Bounds and Limits are described above; but they are Bounds which were set by the Traditions of Men. The Lord says nothing about the College, nor any particular Place or Manner of Education; but only says, *that every Man must improve the Ability that he gives, &c.* And though Mr. Edwards thinks that this is the Way “to avoid bringing Odium upon themselves,” yet I doubt not but that those who persist in this Way, will find that God will make them contemptible and *hate before all the People, according as they have not kept his WAYS, but have been partial in the Law,*

Mal.

Mal. 2. 9 Neither is this the Way to prevent " breeding Uneasiness and Strife among others :" but quite the contrary. For many that they can't but own are godly Persons, within these few Years past, have been brought so clearly to see that the Scheme that is held and practised in the Land, is (in this respect as well as many others) contrary to God's Word, that they could not be easy under it any longer, and therefore have openly renounced Communion with it.

2. Another Thing that evidenceth that many in our Day, set up Man in Christ's Place is, that they hold that if a Man has College Learning, and is regularly introduced according to their Order, he is a Minister of Christ, and sent of God, though unconverted. But Christ says, *I am the Door ; by me if any Man enter in he shall be SAVED.—All that ever came before me are Thieves and Robbers, but the Sheep did not bear them*, Joh. 10. 8, 9. They unless they make a Christ of themselves, none come in by the Door, but those that are in a State of Salvation : All others are Thieves and Robbers, let them have what Learning or Approbation they will of Men.—*Unto the Wicked God saith, what hast thou to do to declare my statutes, or that thou shouldest take my Covenant into thy Mouth.* Psal. 50. 16.

The most plausible Plea that any have for unconverted Men's being Christ's Ministers, is the Instance of *Judas*. But if they duly consider how

the Scriptures represent that Case, methinks they would have done with them Arguments. It is plain that he was chosen to fulfil a particular Prophecy concerning Christ, rather than to be one of his Messengers as the others were : therefore how much Pains did Christ all along take to distinguish him from his other Disciples ? Job. 6. 70. *One of you is a Devil.* chap. 12. 6. *He was a THIEF and had the Bag, and bare what was put therein.* (a proper Description of a false Teacher, chap. 10. 8.) Again, says Christ, *I speak not of you all ; I know whom I have chosen : but that the Scripture (Psal. 41. 9.) may be fulfilled, He that eateth Bread with me, hath lift up his Heel against me.* Joh. 13. 18. So that instead of Judas's doing as much good as any of the Apostles, (which some assert he did) we have no Account that he ever did any Good in the World ; but we have an Account of much Mischief that he did ; for what he was after was filthy Lucre, and not God's Honour and Souls Salvation,---- therefore when he could get the most Money by selling Christ, he readily embraced the Opportunity. And so will any unconverted Man do by the Cause of Christ, let him have never so much human Learning.

3. What makes it still more evident, that many in our Day have set themselves in Christ's Seat (or rather have exalted themselves above all that is called God) with regard to this Matter, is, that as they can commissionate Ministers : so they can dispense with their Commission when they think proper. M Paul

Paul says, *Necessity is laid upon me ; yea, Wo is unto me if I preach not the Gospel.* 1 Cor. 9. 16. But these Men, though they say *They are called of God as was Aaron* : Heb. 5. 4. yet when worldly Interest suits best, they can lay down their Commission, and others can dismiss them from it, so as to speak no more in God's Name. We have plain Accounts of Sundry that the Lord took from other Callings and brought into this.----He called Moses from the Honours of Pharaoh's Court, Exod. 2. 10. &c. Elisa from his Plowing. 1 Kings 19. 19,----21. Amos from among the Herdmen of Tekoa. Amos 1. 1. and 7. 14, 15. Peter and others from their Fishing. Matthew from among the Publicans. Matt. 4. 18,----22. and 9. 9. and 10. 3. And Paul from among the learned Persecutors, &c. ----1 Tim. 1. 12, 13. But for any of the Ambassadors of the King of Heaven to be by his Order, taken out of that Work, and put into any other Business in the World, is what think the Scriptures are silent about : or rather that they speak terribly against. The Lord says, *Wo to the Idol Shepherd that leaveth the Flock : the Sword shall be upon his Arm, &c.* Zech. 11. 17. *The Hireling fleeth, because he is an Hireling, and careth not for the Sheep.* John 10. 13. " Ministers are called Stars, and Angels : but how dreadful is it for such to leave their Stations?" Rev. 1. 20. Jude 6. 13.

Yet there has been so many Instances of this Nature

Nature in our Land, that it seems needless to stand upon the particular Proof of it. Some have left the Place of an Ambassador of Christ, for the Judges Bench, or Governor's Chair *. Others have turned to Merchandizing, or pleading Law ; and so some to one Business, and some to another, as worldly Interest seems to suit best.

And yet they will pretend to read thundering Lectures to those that they affect to call Lay-Teachers † ; and will tell them that *every Man must abide in the same Calling wherein he was called*, Cor. 7. 20. When they can leave their sacred Calling for the Sake of the Honours or Riches of this World ; Alas ! to what a length have the Children of Men run in these Things ! Now Reader, if thy Heart trembles for fear of this great Host ; and thou think it Presumption for a Child to come out against so great an Army of Learned Men, as there are that hold these Things that I propose : let us with *Gideon* and his Servant, take

* One Instance of this was the Hon. Gourden Saltonstall, who formerly was taken out of the Pulpit at New London, to the Place of Governor over Connecticut Colony. He was the chief Instrument of changing the Constitution of the Churches through that Government, from Congregational, to what called the *Saybrook Regulation* : by which, many godly Men have thought that he did as much Mischief as almost any Man that ever was in the Colony.

† Dr. Frank says, that this Way of calling all but the Clergy Men, is a 'pernicious Distinction derived from Popery ; and it is not to be expressed, what horrid Mischief it is the Cause of.' *Fear of Man*, P. 115. 116.

one Turn down by their Camp, and I doubt not but we shall hear something that will strengthen us against their Scheme: and as *David* cut off *Goliath's* Head with his own Sword: and afterwards said, *There is none like it*: 1 Sam. 17. 51. and 21. 9. So I have often thought that in this Case, I desired nothing better than Men's own Weapons to fight them with.

“ When you come near, you will hear them delivering their Minds something in this Form, “ God has always set a sacred Guard around his Ministry, and it is a dreadful Thing to intrude upon it. Before *Moses's* Time, the Priesthood was confined to the First-born: after that, 'twas limited to the Tribe of *Levi*, and the Family of *Aaron*, and the Stranger that came nigh must be put to Death. This held 'till Christ came, who in an immediate Way sent forth his Apostles, and they were to ordain others, which were to commit the Charge to faithful Men; and so the Line was to descend down in an ordinary Way to the end of the World!”

And thus they rank these Things into four great Periods:----one before the Law, one under the Law, the third under the Gospel in the Apostles Time, and the fourth from their Deaths to the end of the World.

Now if we take a View in Scripture Light of either of these Periods, we may find many Things

in them, to cut down the Scheme which these Men plead for.

As to the first, they say, that "From the beginning 'till Moses's Time, the Ministry, or "Priesthood was limited to the First-Born :" which should we allow, yet it is certain that the Line ran rather in the spiritual than natural Birth. Thus in the first Family that was created, *Cain*, the First-born was rejected ; while God had respect to *Abel and to his Offering*, Gen. 4. 4, 5. Also in *Noah's Family*, the Line was limited to *Shem*, tho' *Japheth* was the elder Brother, Chap. 10. 21. So in *Abraham's House*, though *Ishmael* was the First-born, yet *Isaac* was the promised Seed, 21. 12. Likewise in *Isaac's Family*, God said, *The elder shall serve the younger*, Rom. 9. 12.

Thus you see that those who were spiritually the First-born *which were written in Heaven*, (Heb. 12. 23.) the Lord took for his Servants and Ministers, let them stand where they would as to their natural Birth : which clearly cuts off the Notion of any Man's being his Minister that is not born again.

Secondly, "From Moses's Time, they say, the "Priesthood was limited to the Seed of *Aaron*, "and the Stranger that came nigh should be put "to Death, *Numb. 3. 10.*" From whence they argue, that it is a dreadful Thing for any to come into the Ministry, that are not introduced in their Way. But let us take a more close View of these

these Things ; and first observe, that them Priests had a Work to do, which no Mortal has now : and that was to offer Sacrifices for Sin ; in which they typified Jesus Christ. But then I allow that they were to teach *Jacob* God's Law (*Deut. 33. 10.*) as well as offer Sacrifices. But what will Men do with this now ? I trust none will be so vain as to say, that None may be Christ's Ministers in these Days, but Ministers natural Seed. Then I think I must bring it here ; *Aaron* was a clear Type of Christ, and none might be Priests but his Seed : so I believe that none now ought to come into the Ministry, but such as are truly the Children of Jesus Christ, our glorious High-Priest.

Thirdly, In the Apostles Time all own, that Christ did by his divine Authority, and Holy Spirit, call them forth, some from one Business, and some from another, to be his Messengers. And that all Christ's true Minister's experience, essentially the same, I think is made evident in this Treatise.

Concerning the last Period, they say, that " whom the Apostles ordained, were to ordain others, and so the Authority is transmitted down in an ordinary Way." ... Now I find that those who hold the Scheme that I oppose, disagree among themselves. Some say, that *Timothy* and *Titus* were (what they call) ordinary Ministers. But others, when we mention that *Timothy* was called by Prophesie, *1 Tim. 1. 18.* and *4. 14.*

and

and that he was to do the Work of an Evangelist, 2 Tim. 4. 5. I say, when these Things are mentioned, they say we must not expect such Things now, for they were extraordinary Ministers. And so they make all the Ministers that we have a particular Account of in Scripture, to be Men in an extraordinary standing : and the Ministry which they hold to, is that which has taken Place since the Bible was compleated ; which for my Part I do not want to have any Concern with : but I choose such a Ministry as is described, both by Precept and Example, in God's Word.

One main Text that is brought to support this Scheme is that Promise, *Lo I am with you, always, even to the end of the World.* Matt. 28. 20. From whence they reason thus, " The Apostles themselves did not live to the end of the World ; therefore the Promise extends to them that they ordained, and to their Successors, that are introduced in an orderly Way to the end." But waving many gross Absurdities that might be mentioned, this one is sufficient to cut off this Scheme intirely, viz. that it is contrary to the Gospel, to apply that Promise to any unconverted Man, let him be introduced how he will. *All the Promises of God in Christ are yea, and in him, Amen,* 2 Cor. 1. 20. And Peter tells us that a being by God's Power brought to the Knowledge of him, is the Way whereby is given to us exceeding great and precious Promises, 2 Pet. 1. 3. That to be short, the true Meaning of Christ's Words

Words undoubtedly is this, That all his Children in every Age, who are by his Spirit called into this Work, and go on faithfully to teach all Things that he commands them; he has promised that he will be with, assist and bless them, even to the End of the World. And in no other Sense can I conceive it to be true at all, for Christ has never promised to be with his own Children when they turn aside from his Ways; and then surely he has not promised to be with those who never were in him, *who is the Way the Truth, and the Life, Joh. 14. 6.* Much more might easily be said to illustrate these Things; but I have already enlarged much farther than I had any Design of, when I began this Discourse, and therefore I must hasten to a close.

USE II. Hence let every Soul that profess themselves to be Christ's Ministers, examine whether ever they were called into that great Work by the Influences of the Holy Spirit or not. A will own, that *to run before they are sent*, is a dreadful Thing: and I think it has been clearly shewn in this Treatise, that all run before they are sent, who are not called by the Spirit of God. O therefore my dear Reader whoso thou art, that art called a Minister of Christ, charge you in my Master's Name, search critically into the Case and see, hast thou ever been brought into a saving Acquaintance with Jesus Christ? If not, how canst thou pretend to lead Souls to him, and never knew him yourselves? *Art thou a Master in Israel, and not Born again?*

Job

Joh. 3. 10. If thou hast not got into the Kingdom thyself, thou wilt be in danger of hindering those that are entering ; and woful is the Case of such Souls. Matt. 23. 13. O therefore look to your Standing !

And if you find that your standing is in Christ, then examine whether he has called you to this Work or no. Had you ever such a view of Christ and his dear Flock, as to draw forth your Soul to love them above every Thing here ? *yea so as not to count your Life dear to you, so that you might finish your Course with Joy !* Act. 20. 24. Has the Treasure of the Gospel ever been opened and committed to your Soul ? and has God's Command been therewith set home upon your Heart, to *go and feed his Sheep and Lambs !* Joh. 21. 15, 16. Have you been enabled clearly to count the Cost, and to see an infinite Fulness in Christ to supply all your Needs, and to carry you through all the Trials of this evil World ; and have his Promises been sealed to your Souls, so as to bring you with all your Heart to yeild unto God, and (like Abraham's Servant) to *swear unto him to be faithful in this Work of winning a Bride for your Master's Son ?* Gen. 24. 2,----9. Surely, if you have experienced these Things, you know something of it.

USE III. Of Exhortation. *First,* To those who are called of God into this great Work of preaching the Gospel. O my Fathers and Brethren, suffer a Word of Exhortation, though from a Child. N Be

Be exhorted always to view the Worth of Souls; and let the Terrors of the Lord, and the Love of Christ constrain you and I ever to be faithful in our Master's Work, 2 Cor. 5. 11. 19. Ministers are called Soldiers, 2 Tim. 2. 3. and therefore they must expect to endure Hardness, and to go thro' a Variety of Trials here, and not to have a Life of fleshly Ease, or worldly Applause: then let us Fight the good Fight of Faith, and lay hold on eternal Life.----Many Considerations there be that will move our Souls to be faithful, if rightly viewed. The Souls we have the Care of, are the Price of Christ's Blood. Thus says the Apostle, Feed the Church of God which he hath purchased with his own Blood, Acts 20. 28. O did Christ count Souls to be worth so much, that he gave his Life a Ransom for many, and shall not we spend Life and Strength, and exert ourselves to the utmost for their Salvation ? Again, if we are found unfaithful, their Blood will be laid to our Charge, Ezek. 33. 8. And Soul Blood is dreadful to answer for. On the other Hand, if we may be instrumental of turning any to God ; this will be infinitely preferable to all the Gains and Honours of this World. Souls that Ministers are instrumental of converting, will be their Crown of rejoicing in the Presence of our Lord Jesus Christ, at his coming, 1 Thess. 2. 19. Oh how joyfully will faithful Ministers come up before their Judge, with a great Number of spiritual Children round them, that they have been Instruments of turning from Darkness to Light, and from the Power of Satan unto God, Acts 26. 17, 18.

Secondly

Secondly, Let me exhort all Christians in general to improve faithfully what Talents God has given them. Though all are not called to be publick Teachers, yet all are commanded to improve the Gifts that they have. It is as necessary in order for the Welfare of the Church of Christ, that every Gift be improved ; as it is for our temporal Welfare, that all the Members of our Body be used in their proper Place : as the Apostle clearly shews, *Rom. 12. 5. &c. 1 Cor. 12. 12 -- 21.* *The Eye cannot say unto the Hand, I have no need of thee: nor again, the Head to the Feet, I have no need of you....* The neglect of thus living, is undoubtedly one great Cause of the Decay of vital Religion, and of bringing Barrenness upon the People of God. For Christ says, *Unto every one that hath* (i. e. improves what he has) *shall be given, and he shall have Abundance: but from him that hath not, shall be taken away, even that which he hath*, *Matt. 25. 29.* By a faithful Improvement of what Light and Strength the Lord gives, Souls not only gain more, and also do Good to others ; but also they hereby get further Establishment of Soul, and a clearer Knowledge of what their Gift is. And therefore, if any of my Readers have some Conviction on their Minds about Preaching, and yet are at a Loss about the Case ; my Advice is, that with all your Hearts you obey with your God in what has been made clear Duty to him. I don't desire any Soul to go into any Thing without Clearness ; but then be obedient to whatever God has made known of his Will to you, and that is the Way to have other Things made

made clearer and clearer. Christ says that, *If any Man will do his Father's Will, he shall know of the Doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of my self, Joh. 7. 17.*

Thirdly, Should these Lines chance to fall into the Hands of any that are called Ministers of Christ, who disregard, or have not experienced such a Call from God as has been described: to such I would say a few Words.

Sirs, Probably you may look with Disdain upon such a Child as I am: yet while you are making so much of human Learning, as though none could understand the Scriptures without such a great Degree of it; be intreated to pause a little, and take a more serious View of Things, and see if you are not runing in the Path that those did of old, who were found *fighting against God*: whose Language concerning Christ and his Followers was *Have any of the Rulers, or of the Pharisees believed on him? But this People who knoweth not the Law are cursed*, Joh. 7. 48, 49. As if none knew the Law but they. But let Men go as far as they will here, yet without the special Teachings of the divine Spirit, they are *ever learning, and never able to come to the Knowledge of the Truth*, 2 Tim. 3. 7. For *he that knows the Truth, the Truth shall make him free*;--- *yea free indeed*, Joh. 8. 32, 36. What an awful Warning might that Passage be to you? Jude 11. *Wo unto them; for they have gone in the Way of Cain, and ran greedily after the Error of Balaam for Reward, and perished in the Gainsaying of*

of Core. The Way of Cain was this: he brought an Offering to the Lord without Faith and the Assistance of his Spirit; and no doubt but he thought the Priesthood belonged to himself; therefore when he saw that his younger Brother was prefered before him, he was wroth,--- and when he could get Opportunity he slew him, *because his own Works were evil, and his Brother's righteous*, Gen. 9. 3, 5, 8. 1 Joh. 3. 12, Heb. 11. 4. And have you not often felt your Wrath boil, because you have been convinced in your Consciences that God has greatly favour'd some that you reckon far below your selves? Surely your Wrath has often prevail'd too far to be concealed: and had you the Power that many have had in Ages past, we have no Reason to think but that you would proceed to Murder, or putting to Death as well as they. Blessed be God that you are so far restrained.

The Error of Balaam, was his teaching for Reward, or to get temporal Gain, instead of seeking the Good of immortal Souls, 2 Pet. 2. 15. And how common is it in these Days among you that profess to be Christ's Ministers, not only when you first settle to be governed by this to settle where you can get the most Money? but also after you have taken the solemn Charge of a Flock, if you can see a Prospect of getting more some where else, presently the People are threatned that if they will not give you more Sallary, you must leave them? And sundry have thus left, and gone off from the People which they

they had said, *The Holy Ghost had made them Overseers of*. Like *Micah's Priest* (which I think is the only one that we have Account of in Scripture that made a particular Bargain about his temporal Support) who when he had a bigger Offer by the Tribe of *Dan*, though he was content with *Micah* before, yet now not only leaves *Micah*, but also robbed him of his gods, *Judg. 17. 10, 11. and 18. 19, 20.* Very contrary to this is *Paul's Example*, who tells the *Corinthians*, *I will very gladly spend, and be spent for you, though the more abundantly I love you, the less I be loved 2 Cor. 12. 15.*

.... *And perished in the Gainsaying of Core.* This is often applied to such as withstand the Scheme that I have spoken against in this Book. But observe more closely who *Korah's Company* were. Not the meaner Sort of People, but they were Princes of the Assembly, famous in the Congregation, Men of Renown. And what they gainsayed was this great Truth, *That it is God alone that can sanctify and fit Men for, and also call them into this great Work of teaching and leading his People*: As is evident; for *Moses* and *Aaron* were sanctified and called into that Work by the immediate Influences of God's Spirit: but they said, *Ye take too much upon you, seeing all the Congregation are holy, every one of them; wherefore then lift you up your selves above the Congregation of the Lord, Numb. 16. 2, 3.*

How exactly does this Character agree with these

an Internal CALL to preach the GOSPEL. 101

those who deny the Necessity of being specially called by God's Spirit into this Work, and reckon it to be Pride in any to pretend to it?---- They perished in these Gainsayings ; and Oh ! take heed least you follow them down to eternal Wo. There is no Men's Case under Heaven that the Scriptures represent to be so awful as the Case of unconverted, and unfaithful Ministers. What dreadful Things are spoken to such in the 23d of *Jeremiah*, the 34th of *Ezekiel*, and 23d of *Matthew*, as well as many other Places ? O therefore fly immediately to Christ for Pardon and Salvation ! If you come to believe in Christ, and so to stand in the Counsel of God, there is a Possibility that you may yet do Good to Souls, *Jer. 23. 22.* As I doubt not but there are some in our Days who did run into this Work without being sent of God, that yet have been converted, and made a Blessing afterwards ; yet that is no more of a Warrant for others to run so, than it is to run into any other Courses of Wickedness, out of which some have been saved. But if you still go on to make Merchandise of Souls, you will find that your *Judgment now of a long Time lingereth not, and your Damnation slumbereth not*, 2 Pet. 2. 3.

Fourthly, I would speak a Word to those People that look upon all in general which are introduced according to the common Way of the Land, to be Ministers of Christ.----

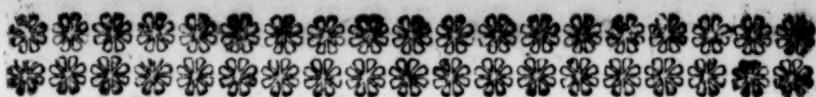
My dear Fellow Men,

Be intreated no longer to take Things by Tradition, but first examine your own standing, whether

whether you were ever *born again* or not. If you have not experienced that Change, you are constantly exposed to be deluded and ruined for ever. For Christ tells us, that false Men, *If it were possible shall deceive the very Elect*, Matt. 24. 24. O ! therefore rest not in being like your Ministers, (Hof. 4. 9.) unless they and you too are conformed to Jesus Christ, *Heb. 13. 7, 8.* If you have not this, read and tremble at that awful Passage in *Jer. 5. 30, 31.* *A wonderful and horrible Thing is committed in the Land. The Prophets prophesie falsely, and the Priests bare Rule by their Means, and my People love to have it so: and what will ye do in the End thereof ?*

Finally. Does the Lord as really by his Spirit call forth his Messengers now as formerly ? then let every Soul that has an Interest at the Throne of Grace, earnestly cry that *the Lord of the Harvest would send forth Labourers into his Harvest, for the Labourers are few*, Matt. 9. 37, 38. Plead that he would speedily gather his Flock, that have been scattered in the cloudy and dark Day, *Ezek. 34. 12.* And that he would deliver all his People from Devourers, and give them *Pastors according to his own Heart*, *Jer. 3. 15.* Now the God of Peace that bro' again from the Dead our Lord Jesus that great Shepherd of the Sheep, thro' the Blood of the everlasting Covenant ; make you perfect in every good Work to do his Will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in his Sight, thro' Jesus Christ ; to whom be Glory for ever and ever. AMEN, *Heb. 13. 21, 22.*

AN



AN

APPENDIX.

Containing some short Account of the Experiences and dying Testimony of Mr. Nathaniel Shepherd, Pastor of a Church of CHRIST in Attleborough ; who died April 14. 1752.

AFTER I had finished what was designed in this Book, sundry serious People who had heard something of the Experiences and dying Testimony of Mr. Nathaniel Shepherd, were very desirous to have them published with this Treatise. But at first I declined it, because the Subscribers were not informed thereof. Yet after further Consideration, I remembered that many People in various Places had heretofore manifested to me a Desire to have something of that printed : And also apprehending that his Experiences would be entertaining

to the generality of those that like this Book ; and sundry renewing their Request to have his Testimony preserved with this Discourse, I at last thought I would venture to add it here by way of Appendix. And what made me more free to do it, was this : He was the first ordained Pastor that has died among those in this Land, *that have in this Day openly withdrawn Communion from the Scheme that I have opposed in this Book.* And though some have been so bold as to say, that *No Person which has done so, and persists in it can die in Peace*, yet his Example, as well as Scores of others, clearly evidence the contrary.

What is here set down, is an Extract out of a larger Account which I took down when I happened to be at *Attleborough* some few Months after his Death, only for my own Satisfaction, and because I thought such Things ought to be preserved, and not lost. I set it down from the Mouths of those that were with him in his Sickness, and at his Death, with the utmost Exactness I could, looking upon it a very great Evil to impose upon Mankind with a false Representation of such Things. I had it mainly from these three Persons following, viz. Mr. *Joshua Everett*, that lived near him, and was with him every Day of his Sickness ; Mr. *William Carpenter*, Pastor of a Church in *Norton*, and his afflicted Widow, who though she was much tried about parting with him at first, yet was brought to a sweet Submission a few Hours before his Death ; and was remarkably borne up under her Trials afterwards. I have added scarce any Remarks of my own on this

this Account, partly for Brevity sake, and partly because many have complained that often " such Accounts have shewn more what the Publishers could say, than what the Person spoken of, said or did :" Therefore I have endeavoured as plainly as might be to give you his own Words, in which, *He being dead, yet speaketh.*

The Person of whom we write, was born in *Norton* on Feb. 13th, A. D. 1712, 13. But before he was grown up, he went and lived in sundry Towns near *Boston*, and after he was married he settled in or near *Brookline*, where he joined to the Church, and for some Years he went on with some outward Strictness in Religion, but was ignorant of the *New Birth*, as he was made to see afterwards ; a very short Account whereof, I find written with his own Hand, as follows.

" I thought one Day in my Retirements that I could not delay to put down a few Lines to keep in Mind what God had remarkably done for my Soul : which Lines I hope God will make use of to bring fresh to my Mind his Love to my Soul when ever I see them. Although I had in my Life before thought my self a passable Christian, though under a great Mistake, as I found afterwards ;—and had been a false Professor of Christ in his Church almost eight Years, for which Abuse I desire to lie low at his Feet all my Days, —It pleased the blessed God in the 28th Year of my Age, to send his dear Servant Mr. Whitefield here amongst us, and by his Preaching I was

“ was much affected, and thought I was reformed,
“ but grew careless again : but I was several Times
“ awakened again by God's faithful Ministers that
“ came among us ; but still remained a Stranger
“ to my self, until the Summer in the Year 1742,
“ then it pleased God to send his dear Servant,
“ Mr. Davenport among us, which was a wonder-
“ ful Man to search Hypocrites ; and thus it please-
“ ed God to make him an Instrument to open my
“ Case to me, in a Sermon at Boston, preached
“ upon the Common from Matth. 3. 10. *And now*
“ *also the Axe is laid unto the Root of the Trees.* —
“ Which was in the 30th Year of my Age, on
“ *Tuesday the 27th of July.* — And I was now un-
“ der a sharp Work of the Law, and was dead to
“ and slain by the Law, and was in a deplorable
“ Condition : — like the Woman that had the ster-
“ bloody Issue, and had spent all upon Physicians,
“ and was nothing bettered, and then applied her to
“ self to the Hem of Christ's Garment, which en-
“ proved her Cure. And as long as a poor Sinner
“ has a Pennyworth of Self righteousness he never
“ will come to Christ. I thought if I did not let go
“ Self righteousness I must perish ; — and if I So-
“ should let all my own Props go, I did not know
“ but that I might fall into the Arms of Christ ;
“ as I believe I did the next Monday after, the An-
“ second Day of *August* in the Year above dated.
“ A memorable Day to my Soul, from which
“ Time I believe I can date my Conversion, while the
“ hearing Mr. Davenport preach from John 6. 37. *For*
“ *All that the Father giveth me shall come to me,* inside
“ and

" and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out. And there I seemed to see the Power of CHRIST's Resurrection ; and that he had satisfied God's Justice, that before was out against me : and that God was satisfied with what he had done. Glory to his Name. This is my Experience in short.

Nathaniel Shepherd.

" Glory be given to FATHER, SON, and HOLY SPIRIT. Amen."

Sometime after his Conversion, he withdrew from the Church in *Brookline*, over which Mr. *Allen* then was Pastor : the chief Reasons whereof were, because Mr. *Allen*, who had favoured the Work of God that was then going on in the Land, afterwards came out against it, calling it a Delusion of the Devil ; and also because many were received her into the Church without giving any satisfying Evidence of their Union to CHRIST, yea without beginning examined any thing about that ; and Persons of a corrupt Life were indulged in the Church, without being dealt with according to Gospel Rule. Sometime in the Year 1746, he was called forth publicly to preach the Gospel, I trust by the Instances of the divine Spirit.

And in the beginning of the following Winter, began to preach to the Congregation in *Attleborough*, over which he afterwards was Pastor : and while in the Spring, at their earnest Desire he removed Family there, and laboured among them with considerable of a Blessing, and in the Fall in 1747 he

he was chosen their Pastor, and was ordained on Jan. 20th. 1747,8. And he was enabled so to walk as to gain a good Report of them that were without, and was beloved by many who were not of his Sentiments in Religion. Though it seems he was so sensible of the want of more Conformity to God, that among other Means that he used to attain it, he determined upon this Method, in the Fall of the Year 1751 ; viz. to spend one Day in the Week in *secret Fasting* constantly, when he was at home, and other necessary Business did not hinder, to seek for greater Measures of the divine Spirit, to assist and bless him, both in his private Walk, and his publick Improvements. And this Practice he kept up 'till he went his last Journey a little before he died : and before his Death he told some intimate Friends that he had enjoyed very great Comforts and Blessings from the Lord in this Exercise.

On Wednesday Feb. 26. 1752. he set away a long Journey up the Country towards Northampton, and was gone five Weeks, and he had remarkable Assistance and Success in his Labours : five Souls he apprehended were converted in the Journey. He came home on April 2. And though he used commonly to come home from his Journeys so spent that he could do but little for some Days after it ; yet now his Soul was so overborn with a Sense of divine Things, that he spent every Day but one till he was taken sick, in visiting, and labouring over with Souls round him, not only publickly, but also in teaching and warning them from House to House with In

with Tears : and seemed to be like one in Haste to have done his Work.

Wednesday April 8. (the Day he was taken sick) as they were going to Family Prayer in the Morning, he said to his Children, " Come we are going to worship the great God, and see to it that you do it in Reality ! do not make a Mock of it, as you have too often done ! " Then he spake to his Children one by one, beginning with the eldest, and down to the youngest that could understand ; and addressed his Discourse to their particular Cases with remarkable Clearness : and he told them that he expected in a little Time to leave their Mother a Widow, and to leave them Fatherless Children. Then he went to Prayer, and had a astonishing nearness to God therein ; and God's Power seemed greatly to seize every Soul present.

And his beloved Consort said that when he went away that Morning, it looked to her that he had discharged himself to his Family, as if he was never to see them more. Soon after Prayer, Mr. Joshua Everett came in, and they set away together to go

to a Meeting, and by the Way they visited several families ; and Mr. Everett said, he never saw him spend such Strength and Fervency in labouring with souls before, as he had now : every Word appeared to be of eighty ; and Mr. E——t said, he heard him not once less than a dozen Times that Day, vocally renewing covenant with God, and give away his All to him ; it also said he longed to spend every remaining Breath in his House.

In the Afternoon they went to the Meeting, and Mr.

Mr. Carpenter preach'd, and in Meeting Time Mr. Shepherd was taken ill, so that as soon as Meeting was done, he hastened Mr. E—— about going home, and they set away together, but he was so swallowed up in discoursing on divine Things, that said no more of his bodily Weakness 'till they had got just home, which was 5 or 6 Miles. Soon after he got into his House he was seized so bad that his Wife could but just get him to bed ; and he was exceeding Ill, and something delireous most of the Night.

But on Thursday Morning, the free exercise of his Reason was restored, and it was continued to him ever after 'till Death. And as Mr. E—— called, as he was going to a Church Meeting, he asked him if he had any particular Message to send to his Church ? And (after pausing a little) he said
 " Yes, I have a Message from God.—Tell them to
 " up and be doing, for Time is short, and there is
 " a great Work to do : I hear the Sound of Death
 " a coming : O tell them — up, up, up !

His Distemper increased upon him very fast, and in the Afternoon they got a Doctor to him, and he judged that he had the quick Fever, " or malignant Pluresy," and that he was seized very hard. But he remained comfortable in Mind through the Day.

On Friday Morning some neighbouring Brethren went over to see him, and as one of them was going to Prayer, they asked what Petition he desired them to put up for him. He answered that he had no certain Views whether he should live or

die in this Sickness. " But, said he, that is not
" the Thing with me, but what I want is, that I
" may spend every remaining Breath for God!"
His Distemper prevailed very fast upon his Body,
but as his *outward Man decay'd*, his *inward Man*
evidently was renewed Day by Day; which he sundry
Times expressed (to People that came in, and
asked how he did) in these remarkable Words,
" I have a shaken Body, but an unshaken Mind."

Saturday sundry Christians met, and spent some
Hours in Prayer with him : but he was so weak
that he could say but little most of the Day, only
he manifested a sweet Calmness of Mind, and an in-
tire Resignation to God's Will, whether it was for
Life or Death.

After they had prayed sundry Times, Mr. Car-
penter and Everett went into the Room where he lay,
and he told them that he had a Desire of seeing,
and bearing Testimony to his dear Church for the
Work of the Lord in these Days ; but whether he
should have Opportunity or no he knew not, and
therefore he did call them as Witnesses to testify
" That he was just of the same Mind about the
" building of the Church of Jesus Christ, and about
" the Ordinances and Discipline thereof, as he had
" been heretofore : and that he did bear Testimony
" against all false Religion, both *Antinomianism* and
" *Arminianism*, whether in Learned or Unlearned."
And he gave them a solemn Charge always to be
faithful for God, in his Work.

On Lord's Day, his first Fever broke, and the
putrid Fever set in, so that all Hope of his Recovery

seemed to be gone : but he continued serene and comfortable in Soul. And sometime in the Afternoon he desired a Woman that was with him, to call in his dear Consort and Children, " For, said " he, I don't know but this is the last Opportunity " that I shall have with them ; 'tis likely that I " shall be a cold Corpse laid against the Wall be- " fore Morning." — And after they were come in (there being no Brethren present) he desired his Wife to pray ; which after some urging, she did, but the Trial seem'd so hard, to part with such a Friend in her difficult Circumstances, that she could not freely give him up to God : which he perceived. therefore after she had done, he prayed ; and (tho' he was very weak, and could bring out his Words but slowly yet) he did very distinctly, and with great Freedom and Strength, first give up his beloved Companion to the Lord : and prayed that he would give her both temporal and spiritual Supplies as she needed, and as he see best for her. Then he went on and prayed for his Children, beginning with the eldest and down to the youngest ; expressing their Names, which were all but one of them Scripture Names, and asking particular Blessings on, and for them, with considerable Reference to Persons of the same Names in Scripture † : and resigned them all up to God, who first gave them to him. Then he also gave up to God his unborn Child. || After

† Their Names are *Zonahban, Nethanael, Ebinezer, Mindwell, Isaac, Elizabeth, Jacob, and Hannah.*

|| Who was born in the following Year, and his Name was *Samuel.*

that

that he came on to the Case of his dear Flock, which he could appeal to God, that *the Holy Ghost made him an Overseer of*. And he did in a wonderful Manner resign them up to his divine Master, expressing his Desire and Belief that he would take Care of them, and carry on his Work among them in this evil Day. Afterwards as People came home from Meeting, many came in to see him, and he had astonishing Assistance, and Clearness in speaking to each one, according to their several Cases ; and to leave his dying Counsels and Charges with them. And though Death evidently was approaching on very fast, yet he was so far from fearing it, that he wanted to have it hasten : which among other Things) he shewed by this, viz. he held up his Hands several Times to see if the Blood did not begin to settle under his Nails ; and when he perceived that it did, he said, " Twas what he had been " desiring and looking for."

Monday, before Day, they sent and called in the Neighbours, for they thought he was dying : but when the Person that has been often mentioned, came in, Mr. *Shepberd* seemed exceedingly swallowed up in Views of divine Things, and he took him by the Hand, and said, " O Brother *Everett* ! " is this dying ! I never thought it was so easy ! " It has seemed hard to me to leave my dear Fa- " mily in this evil World, and above all, to part " with the dear Flock of God : but Oh ! how easy " it is now ! I can leave them with greater Free- " dom than ever I met, with them in the World." Then after one had prayed, he spake particularly

to every Person present, with special Clearness according to their several Cases, and took them by the hand one by one, and took his leave of them :— and to those that he counted Saints, he said, “ I must bid you Farewel, but for a little Time.” But to others he said, “ If you get an Interest in “ Christ, then farewell for a little Space, but if not, “ farewell to Eternity.” To his Brother *Isaac Shepherd* then present, he said, “ O Brother ! you “ and I have made many crooked Paths, but THE “ Way is strait still.”

And for an Hour or more he went on in speaking of divine Things in a wonderful Manner. After that he made his Will and settled his temporal Affairs, in the Forenoon he seemed to revive a little ; but it was not long before his bodily Distress came on heavier again : but through his whole Sicknes he scarce ever spake of any Darknes in Mind, but only once, or more he said, “ Satan has been throw- “ ing his Fiery Darts, but CHRIST hath gotten “ the Victory.”

Late in the Evening, when the Neighbours were generally gone home, and the Watchers were some of them gotten to Sleep, and he had been in a Drowze, his Wife who sat by him, thought she would just step into the other Room to the Fire ; but she soon perceived there was some Alteration, and run back ; and he said, “ Call the Folks, for “ I am a going :” Which she soon did, and sent to the Neighbours, and sundry of them came in presently ; and several of them prayed, and he appeared to have great Comfort of Soul, though he spake

spake but a few Words more. Once he said, "Fare-
" wel vain World, I bid adieu."— And as the
Christians that were round his Bed, were with Free-
dom speaking of the Lord's Faithfulness to those
that have lived devoted to him here ; how he will
stand by them in a dying Hour : and were mention-
ing that Scripture, Psal. 37. 37. *Mark the perfect
Man, and behold the upright ; for the End of that
Man is Peace.* I say, as they were speaking of these
Things, his Wife (who set by him wipeing off the
cold Sweat) said, " I don't question but he under-
" stands what we say, tho' he can't speak." And
then she desired him, that if he understood what
they said, he would hold up his Hand : which he
did, first one, and then both of them ; and then
spake out just so as they could hear him, " Glory !
" Glory ! Glory ! to Father, Son, and Holy Ghost !"
Which were the last Words they ever heard him
speak. Soon after, he breathed out his Spirit into
that eternal World, where undoubtedly he is, and
will be unweareedly ascribing Praise and Glory, to the
Sacred Trinity, for ever and ever. He died about
o'Clock in the Morning on Tuesday April 14.

752.

His Funeral was attended next Day, by a great
Number of People, after a Sermon preached by Mr.
Carpenter, from Psal. 34. 19. *Many are the Afflictions
of the Righteous ; but the Lord delivereth him
out of them all.*



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The C O N T E N T S.

THE Introduction, Page 15. The right Use of the Scriptures
17. And the main Point stated and explained 21.— The Point proved, that God's Messengers now have essentially the same internal Call as heretofore, because they personate the same God 25. And he is as near to his Church to send them forth as formerly 26. And Man is no more fit to commission them now than heretofore 29. And their Work essentially as great as ever 30.— The Nature of this Call explained 34. It contains a Discovery of the present State of God's People 36. A having the Treasure of the Gospel opened and committed to the Soul 38. And God's Command therewith constraining them to go and feed God's Sheep and Lambs 41.— Marks to distinguish Christ's Ministers from others. They may be known by their preaching the whole Counsel of God 43. By their practising agreeable thereto 51. And by their Master's coming with them by his Assistance and Blessing 53.— Objections answer'd. What is plead for, is not a setting ourselves above the Prophets and Apostles, but the contrary 60. There is no Proof from what *Paul* says to *Timothy* that the Work is now left in Men's Hands to send forth Ministers 62. Neither does a holding to this Call destroy external Order 63. There is no Necessity of working Miracles to prove that we have such a Call from God 65. Nor is the Knowledge of the original Tongues absolutely necessary 66. Enthusiasts pretending to such a Call is no just Argument against it 73.— The Improvement. It appears that many in this Day are setting Man up in Christ's Place, because that they hold that what was peculiar to him formerly is left now with Men to do 79. And that they can make such to be Christ's Ministers as he never did 86. And that they can dismiss Men from their Commission when they think proper 87. A short Survey of the common Language of many in our Time concerning the Ministry 90. A Use of Examination 94. And of Exhortation.

E R R A T A.

In Page 7 Line 11, 12. for held and practised, read practised or tolerated. P. 11. l. 13. r. Duty. P. 12. l. 22. r. up. P. 69. l. 20. r. I. Iai. 29. 13.

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